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THE MAKING OF THE CHRISTIAN MIND

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BY

GAIUS GLENN ATKINS, D.D., L.H.D.

PROFESSOR OF HOMILETICS
AUBURN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.
GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK
1928

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES AT THE
COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

FIRST EDITION

To

DR. GEORGE WELLS KNIGHT

Long time and greatly honoured Professor of European—and later of American—History in the Ohio State University

IN WHOSE CLASSROOM I FIRST LEARNED THE DIGNITY OF HISTORY AS A SUBJECT AND SAW IN ACTION THE POWER OF SCHOLARSHIP TO ADORN IT, THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED, IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF A TEACHER'S INFLUENCE AND A FRIEND'S UNFAILING INTEREST

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PREFACE

It has long been the habit of authors to furnish their books with a preface. They thus take the public into their confidence, explaining why they have written the book at all, and giving an account of its genesis and such other matters as may be expected to satisfy an always natural and sometimes lively curiosity. A preface also makes it possible for an author handsomely to acknowledge his debts to others.

Having his hand well in and being reluctant to conclude an enterprise in which he has been so long engaged, the author often goes on to furnish an introduction, which may clear the ground for the more serious and weighty matter of the book itself, and properly prepare the reader for that which he is so soon to encounter. The dividing line between a Preface and an Introduction may be so uncertain as to make it possible, with no great loss to the particular book thus introduced and with some general economy of print and paper and a reader's time, to combine the two.

Any book which has substance enough to justify its adventuring into a world already well supplied with books, is always deeply rooted in the general order of the literature to which it belongs and draws its content from many sources, which the author with the best will in the world can not enumerate. It is also likely to have been long thought over and so to share something of the mystery which attaches to any growth, however modest.

If the book which this foreword introduces had really been written by a teacher of the difficult art of preaching, a reader might reasonably be persuaded that the author had taken considerable pains to leave a field in which he might be expected to be a specialist and adventure into the demesne of his colleagues in theology and church history, with little enough ex-

cuse for so doing and by way of being a warning rather than an example.

But this particular book is the avocation of a pastorate, being mostly conceived and partly written during the latter part of my pastorate in Detroit. There was an interval between the beginning and ending of it long enough to be reflected in the construction of at least the earlier chapters, and to be responsible for some things in expression and connection which I could wish changed. The book itself reflects the author's long interest in church history and religious temperament, and a way into which he has grown of trying to connect the two and finding in their reconciliation the key to many otherwise puzzling things. A good many years ago I gave considerable attention to the classics of religious Confessional literature and made a book of such studies, given to a world, which received it placidly enough under the title "The Pilgrims of the Lonely Road."

I came to know thus that the sources of the great creative theologies are in the experiences of the men who cast their systems out of what has been first molten in their souls and so make doctrine and history. Also that because of the range of these experiences, a vast and inclusive movement like Christianity would naturally organize itself, down to divisive varieties of detail, about the forces and understandings released by these creative temperaments.

A few years later I studied all this in action in our own time in those outstanding and unstandardized forms which offer, as William James said, the best laboratory material and called the result "Modern Religious Cults and Movements." These two books seemed to demand a third which should trace the action and interaction of the varieties of religious temperament through the course of church history. This book is the last, therefore, of a trilogy, though its considerate publisher has been good enough to suggest still one more, "Faiths Ancient and Modern," material for which is already partly in hand and which should appear after a not too long interval.

If I may write with perfect frankness, the sense of the difficulty of the task here undertaken has weighed upon me during

the five years this book has been in gestation, leaving me no satisfaction of mind till I had finished it and a very qualified satisfaction thereafter. It is the sort of thing only a specialist in the whole great region could adequately carry through and only a scholar establish in undisputed solidities.

Dr. Percy Gardner's "The Growth of Christianity" supplied the suggestion around which the organization of what is here presented took form—though with considerable additions. The organization is in a way structural in the development of Christianity itself and one has only to follow the contour of the Christian centuries from peak to peak to find it. But Dr. Gardner supplied a guiding vision.

The first title I chose was "The Changing Phases of the Christian Ideal" and I am still persuaded there was much in that title to commend it. The title finally chosen was itself suggested by Stawell and Marvin's extremely creative book "The Making of the Western Mind." The discerning critic will likely discover evidences of the effect of the change of titles upon the book.

I can only hope that somewhere in a book in debt to Gardner for organization contours and to Marvin for title suggestion there is something which can be claimed as the author's own offering. A good deal of my reading and some of my meditation for a long period has gone into the general substance of what follows. I have taken great pains to acknowledge every indebtedness for which a footnote can be supplied, but if the discerning reader discovers the source of this or that in general authorities and the general mind of the time—he will doubtless be quite right. I have used recognized authorities in every department to check off the accuracy of facts and positions and, in most cases, two or three whose names are as useful as a longer list. Guinebert's "Christianity" appeared just as the book was getting finished. He is a brilliant authority in the new historical interpretation of Christianity and I have had a certain satisfaction in finding the general approaches here set out supported by so eminent a specialist.

Some of my colleagues in Auburn Seminary read chapters belonging to their special departments. Their gracious services are

acknowledged in the proper places. I am in debt to them for criticism and correction but they have no responsibility for positions taken or conclusions advanced.

The plan which is here developed is uniformly followed: to establish the historical basis for the successive phases of developing Christianity, then consider the effect upon the general mind of the church. In the actual structure of the book the historical has taken, perhaps, a larger place than the title would seem to justify and there is an alternative of discussion and generalization which, if it had been carried through as it might be, would have made a book of different character; not quite so fact burdened and freer from matter of more interest to the theologians than to the general reader. But I found it impossible to go on in any chapter without establishing the fact basis for its conclusions. A few chapters, not too many I trust, use technical matter. I do not see how that could be helped. If one is to consider the making of the doctrinal mind, one must deal with the doctrines as they took form, and so with the rooting of Christianity in the hopes and expectations—which we call prophecy—of the Hebrew people.

Many of the subjects here considered belong to controversial regions and sharply divide the Christian mind. It is quite impossible, I am persuaded, to reach conclusions which can satisfy everybody. Any man who writes upon such themes will be influenced by forces far more subtle than any statement of fact he can manage.

Points of view, then, which are native to my own mind have left their mark upon these pages. The discerning critic, again, would be able to place the author in his own classification of temperaments and attitudes. I can only say that I have tried to be as fair as I know how and if the strength of positions to which I was not born is somehow missed, it is through an inescapable limitation which deserves pity rather than blame.

For the Christian mind is strangely hard to write about. It is a mind of central unities with marginal variations so opposed as sometimes to hide its unity. It is the creation of manifold forces working through almost three thousand years, and it is the creation of a lonely teacher whose brief ministry began

and ended in the high-lands of Palestine. It has a power to subdue changing civilizations and diverse races to its own essential character and yet it has taken colour from every considerable influence which has touched it, every outstanding situation of which it has been a part.

There are sub-levels of temperament which lie beneath the Christian mind to give it its dominant qualities. I would not say that all its defences of polity and its interpretation of liturgies and symbols have been word patterns embroidered upon forms and attitudes created by the persistent and elemental, but to a degree that is true.

The mystic, the rationalist and the administrator have divided the empire of the Christian mind between them and, having drawn the frontiers of their provinces, have defended and explained positions taken in answer to some deeper necessity of their souls. The Christian mind has been created by these profoundly various approaches to the mind of Jesus, by inheritances older than the Gospels and by the interplay of the forces, the passions, the races, and the destinies of all of Europe and a little of Asia and Africa for two thousand years.

The outcome has been the historic communions, the great creeds, the wealth of liturgies haunted by old memories and older hopes and the Christian attitude toward life and all its issues seen and unseen, temporal and eternal.

There has been nothing like it since our knowledge of our humanity and its ways began, and the story of how it has all come to pass would be the most wonderful story in the world —if only one knew how to tell it.

Here is the key to the understanding of these differences which are of such serious concern to all who dream of a united Christendom. The knowledge of this will not make the resolution of our difficulties more easy. Nothing is so persistent as a human attitude matured through long periods of time, incarnate in massive institutions and supported by pride and loyalty and ancient habit. But if we should recognize the deep rooting of these venerable growths in varieties of temperament and inheritances, and recognize at the same time how inevitable it has all been, we should be kinder in our judgments

of one another and gladly confess the reality of the Christian revelation in those whose mind about it is not, in these marginal regions, our own. Whatever there is to say beyond this I leave to the book itself to say.

GAIUS GLENN ATKINS

Huntington House,
Auburn Theological Seminary
October 5, 1928

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THE MAKING OF THE CHRISTIAN MIND

THE MAKING OF THE CHRISTIAN MIND

Chapter I

THE THREE GREAT INHERITANCES OF THE CHRISTIAN MIND

CHRISTIANITY began with three great inheritances: a hope, a song, and a law. These might seem an insubstantial foundation upon which to build a world religion, but the event has demonstrated their solidity. For the song was the grave music of the psalmists which sounds the heights and depths of the ways of God with the soul and the ways of the soul with God, and voices the religious assurances and experiences of the Hebrew people in universal forms for all devout to take and make their own. Christianity has kept the Psalms to supply a substance for its liturgies. It has made chants of their strophes and dignified them with majestic Latin titles. It has sung them in forbidden assemblies, woven their phrases into its prayers, and repeated their assurances in its pilgrimages through shadowed valleys and in engagements on desperate battlefields.

The inheritance of the Psalms carried with it the substance of Hebrew faith. There was, two thousand years ago, no other adequate point of departure for a world religion. Hebraism had its limitations but there was then nothing to compare with it in a lofty monotheistic faith and a rich assurance of the meaning of God for life. The Psalms were only the hymn book of the Jewish faith and, like hymn books ever since, the songs of it were written out of theologies and understandings

of earth and sky, memory and history, the experiences of the state and singers whose names are lost in the general oblivion of time.

The Psalms have kept—as hymns always do—what is truest and most universal in the Hebrew faith. Christianity has had its own difficulties with other elements in its Hebrew inheritance. It has not found all the Psalms proper voices for the expression of its own spirit. But they have continued, as noble poetry always does, what is timeless and native to the needs and assurances of the soul. But if Christianity had done no more than take over and continue the finest elements of Hebrew faith and devotion, it would not be Christianity.

The law was the ethics of the Old Testament. The ethical system of Judaism was equally strong and unique. The Jew has associated righteousness and religion in most intimate and commanding ways. He offered their interwoven regnancy through his sacred books as God's authoritative revelation. His decalogue had been, he believed, written on tables of stone by the finger of God Himself; the very details of his sacrifices had been dictated by Jehovah. The ethics of the Jewish religion were centrally grounded in the fundamental moralities, but there was a marginal region in which an endless detail of religious ceremonial was given the same authority as the purely ethical. Christianity freed itself from Jewish ceremonial, though it did not find the process easy—and the conservative Christian mind has never questioned the divine enactment of the Jewish ritual and particularly the sacrificial system, making it all a "prophetic" anticipation of the final Christian system.

The Christian religion has built its ethics upon the Ten Commandments. It has continued and reinforced the Hebrew insistence upon the indivisible unity of religion and righteousness, the assurance that the moral law is the revelation of God's will, supported by divinely adjudicated rewards and punishments. Christianity has kept also something of the hard legalistic mind of its Judaic inheritance, an element hard to reconcile with the free and loving goodness taught by Jesus Christ. In the general strength and contour of it, the

moral law which Christianity has thus inherited is austerely noble. It has supplied an ample support for conduct and legislation. It has become a part of the common law of the English-speaking peoples; it has invested morality with the awesome sanction of a divine decree and illumined the roads of duty with an unfailing light. But Christianity would not be Christianity if it had done no more than continue what was universal in the Jewish law.

I

Christianity is directly approached through a great hope

The hope was the Messianic expectation and the direct approach to Christianity is through this hope. A great religion like a great tree has a tremendous spread of root. Christianity would not have maintained itself as an increasing force through the centuries unless on the human side it was strongly rooted in the most persistent and pregnant needs of the human spirit, and nothing is more persistent or pregnant than a commanding hope. Christianity holds its supreme place in history because it fulfilled a supreme hope. The tap-root of it is in the Hebrew expectation of the Kingdom of God and a heaven-sent Leader.

The elements which combine to create a great hope

The very greatest hopes are persistent aspects of creative idealism. They are born of conditions peculiar to no single time or place. They grow out of the passion of the oppressed for freedom, or the thwarted for opportunity, or the sorrowing for comfort, or the stained for forgiveness. Deeper still, if possible, is some sense of fretting maladjustment between ourselves and our general environment. A man makes any present order the homeland of his soul at sore cost to something within him which claims another birthright. If he can find no other avenue of escape, he builds himself, at least, some shining road of hope.

Once the mind is engaged upon a task like this there is no limit to its range. It will call imagination to its aid and build for itself a jeweled city, a state adorned with justice, peace,

and righteousness. It will be compelled to consider whether its ideal order may be realized in this world or in another. It will speculate also on the course of the human history, and whether things have always been so bad, and whether men can manage their own deliverance or whether God alone can deliver them, and when and how.

Hope takes distinctive national and religious forms

There are, then in any long held hope, elements common to all human protest against unhappy state. Nothing else is so deeply involved in the contrasts of life, the mysteries of existence. Hope is the ageless appeal of humanity to an ultimate justice and love. But, if the hope has become a recognized expression of the idealism of a particular nation you will find in it some peculiar genius of the nation which conceived it, the prophets and poets who voiced it, and the circumstances which shaped and enriched it. Where the ruling interests of a people are religious and the prophet is the accredited spokesman of God, these hopes take a definitely religious and ethical line. Their realization is conditioned upon the religious faith and devotion of the people, and above all dependent upon the sovereign will of God.

The Jewish Messianic hope took this high ethical and religious line. Hebrew prophecy shares such backgrounds as we have been considering with other hopes and ideals, which have for one reason or another long fallen out of the common mind, but it developed them in its own peculiar way. A great fellowship of prophets, whose faith in God and understanding of Him begins a new epoch in the history of religion, make hope the motif of their message, and through their combined ministry the Jewish Messianic expectation emerges with certain massive and cumulative unity. Goodspeed defines it as "the fixed social belief of the Jewish people that Jehovah would deliver Israel and erect it into a glorious empire to which a conquered world would be subject." "The Messianic idea," says Knudson, "embraces at least four distinct elements. Primarily, it is concerned with the *new age* and the redemption of Israel, but with these ideas is associated the thought of Judgment, a judgment both upon foreign nations and upon

Israel, and to this again, is to be added the belief in a *personal Messiah.*"[1] These definitions, which might be endlessly enlarged upon from the massive literature upon the subject, are both too technical and too simple. We must know the mind of Israel and how the Hebrew people came to think of themselves as a chosen race with a birthright of destiny before we can understand the genesis of this expectancy at all.

II

So tremendous an adventure of the spirit naturally moves along a wide front. Even quite conservative scholars do not seek to focus every passage in the Old Testament, which breathes a hope or sings a song of expected deliverance, upon one point. It is always easy to see after some event upon which vast issues turned, how everything led up to it. But before the event great hopes and dreams are like searchlights playing along wide horizons; what they seek is there, but they will find it only by seeking. Prophecy is in a very true sense only the assumption of something which the prophet believes must happen because he sees all the facts and forces of his time fatefully converging upon it and because it is, besides, the will of God. The prophet is sure of the issue; but he cannot particularize it.

If the Messianic hope had ended with Jerusalem, and remained thereafter only an unfilled splendour of expectation for the Jew to puzzle over and adjust to the outcome of his checkered history as best he could, it would be no concern of Christian thought. It would be a fascinating theme for the student of ideals, and he could treat it with a freedom and insight now sadly wanting in many studies of it. It needs to be understood always from the inside through some sure imaginative sharing of the fateful destiny of the Jew. How can we make so splendid and strange a passion real unless we go down the streets of Babylon with the exiled, or see the Greek profane the temple, or watch a Roman soldier ride down a Jew who was in his way, while the people who suffered

[1] *The Religious Teachings of the Old Testament*, p. 351.

all this believed themselves God's elect and holding the future in fee?

But it did not end with Jerusalem. It was continued in two lines, neither of which could have lain within the most daring reach of the prophet's vision. The consciousness of favour and destiny in which Israel so long lived, has been fulfilled for the Jewish people beyond the dream of any prophet or any psalmist either. How could Isaiah have foreseen that his interpretation of history in terms of the will of God would control the devout thinking of civilizations not to be born for twenty centuries? Or how could the prophet of the exile know that his ideals of peace and justice would become the luring dream of nations yet unborn? Or how could the psalmists know that their music of faith and struggle and hope would be sung around the world?

The true destiny of Israel

It was the appointed destiny of Israel, not to rule a little state from David's throne in gray old Jerusalem, but rather to lay the foundations upon which the faith and devotions of the ages should build their temples; to supply to liturgies their most majestic phrases; to furnish the jurisprudence of nations with its decalogues; to voice a hope which, reborn in Christianity, has lived across the ages. This is destiny enough for any race.

For the Messianic hope became a Christian inheritance and something more. Without it, humanly speaking, there would have been no Christianity at all, and without Christianity Jewish Messianism would be, save among the orthodox Jews, only one more fascinating chapter in the long history of human Utopias.

III

We begin to trace its historic development

But we need to deal a little more definitely with the development of Messianic hope in the Old Testament. Goodspeed traces this developments in so fine and clear a way as to make his divisions and subdivisions signposts to go by.[2] Back

[2] *Israel's Messianic Hope*, generally.

of all Old Testament prophecy is an ideal conception of man and his destiny. The Jewish religion shares with many other religions the retrospect of a ruined humanity and the anticipation of a redeemed humanity, but differs from them in its strongly stressed ethical elements. Sin has ruined paradise, and the assurance of victory over sin is the key to the hope of Paradise Restored. These dim and general expectations become more bright and definite in their hope of national home and glory and the expectation of the leader strong enough to guide the people toward a far-off but splendid destiny.

The Jewish hope of national home and glory

With the beginnings of the monarchy and a more regnant sense of national unity, the expectation of a royal nation appears; this is sustained by and, in turn, strengthens one of the tenacious and formative forces in Hebrew religion—the persuasion that the Jews are a chosen people, having Jehovah for their portion, whose they are by a blood-bond covenant. Such royal figures as David and Solomon—David preëminently—captured the imaginations of the people, and naturally of the psalmists, whose poetry, though always religious, was often both patriotic and occasional, when it was not the exquisite and timeless lyric of the travail and the triumph of the psalmist's own soul in his quest for God. Poets, being generous minded, have always sung the praises of reigning houses. It would be strange if the psalmist also were not sometimes a poet laureate, singing the glory of his king and yet, in his praise, anticipating another King, more truly great and royal.

Great words which still rule the realm of the ideal now begin to emerge—peace and justice and righteousness—each one of them a hope-lit summit against a background of shadowed actuality. The ideal king is to be a warrior or a royal bridegroom or a royal benefactor. Zion is to be his capital, the city of the Great King. One has only to repeat such phrases, all of them taken from the Messianic psalms, to see how deeply they are now established in the very heart of Christianity, sing themselves still in Christian hymns, voice themselves anew in Christian prayer.

How history dealt with this hope

The familiar course of Jewish history did more than postpone these hopes. It seemed in every successive phase of it always more deeply to deny them. History is full of contradictions, but I wonder if there is anywhere any witness to the force of a great hope more arresting than the Jew in his upland country, at the mercy of Philistia, or Syria, or Egypt, or Assyria, or Babylon, or Persia, or Greece, or the scavengers of the empire of Alexander, or Rome, or his own divided and embittered partisanships; never great, never free for long, but unconquerable in hope, tenacious in dreams, and dowering his expectation of the future with an always more ample splendour as the shadows of the present closed down forebodingly.

The prophets never doubted God

Hope deferred often makes the heart sick, it also turns the saddened spirit searchingly back upon the causes of its disappointment. The prophets never doubted God. He was just and true. The fault, then, must be in the people themselves. Kings and commoners were adjourning the realization of the Divine purpose by their wickedness and impiety. National calamity, they passionately proclaimed, was a just punishment for individual and national sins; they had no hope of better things until the accounts had been balanced. This insight, this persuasion has persisted and still colours the Christian outlook upon history.

But the more sensitive felt that something more than justice was involved. Love also was involved, and love would neither let go nor be defeated. There is in Hosea, for example, a note of mercy and a haunting and dearly bought certainty that love is the one unconquerable force. Jehovah's love will reclaim and heal His backsliding people, the dew of God's mercy refresh a parched land and make it the Garden of the Lord.

IV

Isaiah's expectations

The prophecies of Isaiah move between two expectations of a God-sent deliverer whose birth will be marked by wonder and who is to bear mighty symbolic names; the other that Jehovah

himself will save the state. The passages which express this second confidence are later in date and have the greater consistency.[3] The earlier passages are fragmentary, and it is difficult always to find a proper setting for them. They are like a moving light shining for a moment through some break in the cloud, with the suggestion of a glory beyond earth and time, then the clouds close in again and the light is gone. Christian faith has naturally made more of these occasional foregleams and anticipations of the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, but the ethical insight and the social understanding of Isaiah are surer than his rhapsodies. He is the first of the prophets to see the significance of a minority. He does not call it a minority, he calls it a "remnant," but Isaiah's remnants are not something left over; they are the dependable and clear-visioned minorities who are always the seed and seed bed of the future.

National or individual deliverance?

The older prophets and the psalmists generally were incurable nationalists; it was all, with them, or nothing. Isaiah saw that there might be in the nation itself the beginning of a new alignment, the shadowy emergence of new human associations. "Till then," says Robertson Smith, "no one had dreamed of a fellowship of faith disassociated from all national forces, bound together by a faith in the Divine Word alone. It was the birth of a new era in Religion, for it was the birth of the conception of the Church, the first step in the emancipation of Spiritual Religion from the forces of Political life."

Very likely Robertson Smith reads back too much into the cryptic sayings of Isaiah, for a prophet is never to be taken with a hard literalism. He is a man of gleams and flashes, of stern anger and correcting tenderness. He has luminous insights and inspired understandings of far issues, and lives through alternating hopes and despairs. No prophet, I suppose, ever dreamed that his words after three thousand years would be put on the dissecting table to be taken apart to their last syllable—or else put on the teacher's desk to prove a

[3]But scholars are not agreed in dating these passages.

thesis. He used what words he needed and then forgot them, and the only necessity he recognized was to adjust the ways of his own soul and the ways of society about him to God's will and God's ways.

If he recast his faith and his message to suit his changing understandings, he did no more than others have done since. Isaiah might well have believed, in one state of assurance, that God would save His people through a Son of that people and, in another phase of insight, that God Himself would save the nation. In the end both assurances proved true, and Christian faith did no violence to either in uniting them both in Jesus Christ.

V

Jeremiah speaks to a troubled time

Jeremiah fell on unhappy times, and his prophecies reflect it. There is now, he proclaims, no hope of national deliverance; a merciless foe will scourge a corrupt people. He sees nothing along any horizon but defeat and captivity, yet his hope persists. A restored Israel will praise God for a new deliverance, this time not from Egypt but from Chaldea, and a Son of the house of David "shall reign as King and deal wisely." The everlasting love of God will gather His people together and a new law will be written, not on tables of stone but in their hearts. So Jeremiah himself became the prototype of the Man of Sorrows acquainted with grief, and the herald of a forgiveness which will "remember sin no more."

The prophet of the exile added a transcendent note to these songs of deliverance. He, too, shared the hope of a nation emancipated and a restored Jerusalem up to whose always open gates the nations of the earth shall bring honour and glory. But he sees something more. He sees a people distinguished by service rather than strength; the servant of Jehovah and not his most favoured nation. For our purposes in this study it makes no great difference whether the "servant" of the second Isaiah is the chastened nation or an elect individual, though the weight of sound scholarship is now for the nation as the "servant." We are tracing the genesis and de-

velopment of hopes and understandings which were finally, in one way and another, so profoundly to influence Christianity that without them there would be, humanly speaking, no Christianity at all—and it is impossible to overestimate the influence of these last twenty-six chapters of Isaiah upon Christianity. Jesus began His public ministry by quoting one of the noblest passages and offering Himself as the fulfillment thereof. Christian devotion ever since has seen Him standing in their light as though all the brightness of their rising was for Him.

Something new has come into Hebrew prophecy with the prophet of the exile—the conception of social and spiritual responsibility. The victorious servant is to fulfill his supreme destiny, neither in power nor glory—though there are power and glory here—but in bringing judgment (which is God's equity) and truth into a world whose farthest isles are waiting for the revelation thereof. And all this is to be done in saving quietnesses, as if truth were a thing passed in unspoken understandings from soul to soul, and in saving gentlenesses; as if the low flame of truth and goodness in a world so nearly dark were to be nursed into a clear high light, and in saving confidence that no passion to make God's world just and right is ever in vain.

The first sight of the Cross

But there is an insight deeper and higher still, bought at a great cost and possible only to those who have suffered much and felt deeply; the understanding that the servant must suffer since there is no other way of saving men or situations but the truly royal way of suffering with and for them. Hosea had known this a little; he learned it by his own dishonoured hearthstone. Jeremiah had learned it in his own sufferings and through his persuasions of the unfailing love of God. Any man who knows that love never faileth must know also how love suffers many things through its constancy. But it was left for the noblest singer of them all to chant, in phrases which are now the timeless possession of faith, the travail of the suffering servant.

Such music as this is possible only to those who have heard

in their own sorrows, the overtones of pity and pathos and stark necessity and strange acquaintance with grief and the carrying of unmerited sorrows, which are the melody of their song. In plain words, here is an insight possible only to a man or a time grown old in sorrow and hope deferred, and yet always without yielding to sorrow or losing hope.

The meaning of the shadowed side of life, the computation of the far-off interest of tears, the attempt to justify the ways of God to man has been a more than fascinating subject since the days of Job; but it was left to a nameless prophet amongst an exiled people in old Babylon to have first clearly seen and then movingly sung that sorrow may be redemptive and the Saviour of men choose no road but the road of the Cross.

The general character of great prophecy

In such ways as this the prophetic approach to Christianity reached its loftiest range of vision. We shall do it an immense wrong if we make this long process hard, narrow, or mechanical, or if we assume that the prophet himself always foresaw the definite way in which his prophecy would find its historic issue. It is a great chapter in the quest for Redemption and, given the goal of it all as Christian theology conceives it, it is easy to go back and fit it all together and focus it in every detail even to the sepulchre of Jesus, upon Him and His Cross.

But it was also vast and free and vital. It has for its backgrounds the shadowed incompleteness of life and the native nostalgias of the soul and a strange sense of destiny peculiar to the Jew, and dreams of grandeur and the baffling contradictions between glowing expectation and checkered experience. It is born of the idealization of the throne of David and endless defeat in war and national subjection to the ungodly. It voices the puzzle of the prophet over hope deferred and his quenchless confidence that God could not be beaten by Egypt or Assyria or Chaldea.

It deepens down into something more universal—the meaning, that is, of sorrow and long, trying experiences, and the fall of shadows across the roads of life, and the mind of

God thereupon, and the purposes of God therein, and whether love can be defeated, and how love should become triumphant and ultimately the way of God with man. It is the strange and stormy music of the entangled human spirit seeking an issue for life commensurate with the pain and splendour of it. Everything is there which Christianity has since taken over and, though we wander far afield in our spiritual quests, we come back in the end to the great assurances and expectations and understandings which lie like light at the heart of the great Hebrew prophecies to us.

Yet if there had been nothing else we should be far from the inheritance Christianity received from Judaism.

VI

The twilight of the prophets

All great movements spend themselves. Creative phases of the human spirit, having done their work, pass through some exhaustion of inner force into periods of transition and the human spirit lies fallow, as it were, for some later growth. But no great force or phase of the human enterprise ever ends abruptly. There is always a twilight time when the high lights darken but the dark has not yet fallen, and there was a twilight of the prophets.

Symbolism appears

Hebrew prophecy after the Exile took several lines. It became confused and symbolic as in Ezekiel and the lesser prophets of his school. The Western mind makes hard going of symbolism, being inclined to take it quite literally and find some actual equivalent for creatures with four faces and four wings, the noise of whose wings is as the noise of many waters, and wheels and dreadful rings of eyes, when the symbolist is only trying to convey some impression of majesty or power and calling to his aid a strange gift of grandiose imagination, or else writing history in enigmatic ways.

Symbolism may be very concrete and simple. When a prophet tears his mantle into twelve pieces to symbolize the divisions of David's kingdom, a child may understand him. When Isaiah went about for three years barely clad and bare-

foot to suggest the pitiable weakness of Egypt and Ethiopia, he doubtless gave a force to his warning prophecies beyond the power of words, though nowadays we should call him fairly sensational. So Jeremiah broke a bottle to warn his people that they were soon to be broken. So Henry Ward Beecher threw the leg irons of a slave upon the floor of his pulpit and trampled upon them to show his hatred of slavery. Holman Hunt's lovely picture, The Light of the World, is symbolical and luminous with meaning. So is Watts's picture of Hope blindfold upon the sphered world playing one string of a harp whose other strings are broken and mute. But Watts's pictures of the Cosmos and Chaos are another matter.

When symbolism becomes too grandiose or is burdened with suggestions too vast for any human creation to carry, it ends in confusion. Hebrew prophecy took that line. Ezekiel's vision of the winged messengers of God surrounded by dreadful rings of eyes is like a murk of troubled storm shot with gleams of light, splendid but terrible and too high for homely human use.

This growing tendency toward symbolism which is really a mark of the loss of true and simple power—simple because true—merged with another line as difficult and significant. The great prophets corrected the failure and unhappy issue of great hopes by adjourning these hopes to the future and promising a happier state to a chastened and repentant people. But as the centuries passed and no hope came true, prophecy gave up its hope of earth and man turned to the skies. God was no longer expected to come into His world through the devout and obedient lives of His children. He would part the heavens and send down His conquering hosts. The searchlight of prophecy no longer played along the horizons of the human; it left the earth and searched the sky.

The drama of "last things" emerges

This last phase of expectation took such dramatic form as makes all other drama colourless. It involved conflicts of forces moving through tremendous action to momentous issues, in which kingdoms were to be overthrown and empires haled before the throne of Judgment. Now finally symbolism and the programme of the overthrow of earthly

power by the embattled might of God meet and merge, and here, just here, in the Book of Daniel out of visions of beasts and thrones of fire and opened books of judgment the Messiah, so literally named, at last, appears. Did ever an expected deliverer have so strange a background?[4]

The enthronement of a word may become as epochal in human history as the enthronement of a king. For the great words have an empire of their own, which makes the empires of Cæsars and Napoleons ephemeral. Once a word has become strongly established at the centre of any great range of associated interests, it rules by a kind of divine right. You cannot dethrone it without a revolution, and then often enough you have nothing better to put in its place and so set it back upon its throne again. And if the word rule in the empire of imagination and faith and devotion, becoming central in religion, and securing for itself, to continue the figure, great retinues of prayer and praise, you can never overestimate its importance.

The word Messiah takes the throne

The word Messiah is like that. It ruled Jewish thought and faith from Daniel to Simeon and has been ruling great regions of Christian thought and faith ever since. One cannot approach the beginnings of Christianity save through the empire of it. We know it best, of course, through its Greek equivalent, for Christos is the Greek translation of it, and both Messias and Christos mean Anointed. There are abundant uses of the word Anointed in the Old Testament before Daniel, and, if there were time or need, some consideration of the uses and associations of anointing might be profitable. It has its own backgrounds in folk habit and be-

[4]My colleague, Dr. Harlan Creelman, who has read this chapter and given it the benefit—which it does not properly show—of his learned and gracious criticism, reminds me that there are great differences of opinion as to the interpretation of the Messianic idea in Daniel. There differences of opinion centre around the "Son of Man" rather than the definite word "Messiah." Some think it means an individual, others. "the glorified and ideal people of Israel." Driver doubts the accuracy of the authorized translation. (See Driver's *The Book of Daniel*, p. 102, and Knudson's *The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament*, p. 376.) But for the uses of Daniel made by general Christian thought the statement above is accurate enough.

lief, and is a fascinating illustration of the way in which customs, deeply rooted in primitive belief, may ripen into hallowed ceremonials as diverse as the anointing of a king in gray old Rheims or Westminster, or the oil of extreme unction with which the priests of the Latin Catholic Church mark the forehead of the dying.

It would require an analysis of the uses of the word in the Old Testament, not possible or necessary here, to disentangle so complex a development and assign each use to its proper association. For sometimes the anointing is for mercy, sometimes for war, sometimes for the altar, and sometimes for the throne. The anointed may be Cyrus or Saul; but through it all is the meeting of office and honour and power to make the anointed a figure to master the imagination, a sovereign in the realm of faith or hope. In the end the Anointed One was not to be any earthly king at all, but a Deliverer or Redeemer, God-given from above.

Now that the hope has finally found a name, the name subdues the hope to its own great meanings; and yet if what has so far been said in this chapter be true at all, the creative backgrounds of this Messianic expectation are in the travail of human experience and recurrent sorrow, the disillusioning course of wearing centuries and an unconquerable hope and faith that God will not fail His own. But these simple and profound confidences were always mediated through human agencies. The changing form of their expression reflects such current conditions as always govern the course of a ruling ideal through a long period of history. The history of any persistent idea is always the most fascinating history in the world, and you would need to know all history to write it, and the story of the souls of the men who continued and voiced it besides.

VII

Changing forms of Messianic expectation

The Messiah whom expectant Jewish faith enthroned during the last centuries before the Christian Era was not Isaiah's suffering servant. The Messiah, as finally conceived, would change the world, not by changing the minds of men

in ways of true understanding, and their hearts in ways of right love and motive, but rather by a sheerly supernatural intervention. Once this idea got rooted in it grew prodigiously and took strange forms, conditioned only by the power of heated imagination to conceive some drama of the overthrow of empires and the coronation in their stead of the Anointed One who was to be God's instrument and vicegerent in the whole strange and splendid movement. No wonder Hebrew apocalyptic literature is the strangest literature in the world. Once creative imagination has escaped the steadying control of experience and the scientific sense, anything is possible to it.

The hope becomes definitely a drama of the end of the age

These current expectations had their roots in the persuasion that the world was too far gone in evil ways to be saved without supernatural help. That help, since it did not come and would not come gradually, must come suddenly, and since there was no precedent in history nor any help in experience for such an invasion of human affairs by God, faith and imagination made what seemed to them a proper programme for His coming, and associated His coming with a Day of Judgment in the which the doom of the wicked would be registered and the deliverance of the righteous assured through the shock and dissolution of the temporal world order.

It creates a strange literature

Books which are hardly so much as names for any but the students of the period between the Old and the New Testament, describe the Last Judgment with imaginative fullness of detail. There are substantial differences, as there naturally would be, between various authors, for they had really nothing to control them but their imaginations. "The most popular doctrine of the Messiah made Him a man of war." This is reflected in the Book of Revelation and has given a quality to Christian thought and Christian hymnology much in evidence among us. We bring our processional choirs into church singing "The Son of God Goes Forth to War," quite unconscious, it may be, that we are echoing old strains of strange writings.

Some of these visionaries were of a more peaceful spirit,

being taught of Isaiah that in quietness and confidence they should find their strength, and in returning and rest be saved. But they were generally agreed that their God would come down to save them and send their enemies to Gehenna and establish them in an enduring bliss which might gain some added felicity from the contemplation of their oppressors in a distressful state. The hymn of the last things in the assumption of Moses (a book written about the time of the birth of Jesus) is as good an example as any of the gusty music in which this pious hope sang itself out.[5]

"For the Heavenly One will arise from His royal throne,
And He will go forth from His holy habitation,
With indignation and wrath on account of His sons.

"And the earth shall tremble: to its confines shall it be shaken:
And the high mountains shall be made low,
And the hills shall be shaken and fall.

"And the horns of the sun shall be broken, and he shall be turned into darkness;
And the moon shall not give her light, and be turned wholly into blood.
And the circle of the stars shall be disturbed.

"And the sea shall retire into the abyss,
And the fountains of water shall fail,
And the rivers shall dry up.

"For the Most High will arise, the Eternal God alone,
And He will appear to punish the Gentiles,
And He will destroy all their idols.

"And God will exalt thee,
And He will cause thee to approach to the heaven of the stars,
In the place of their habitation.

[5] R. H. Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 301 et seq.

"And thou shalt look from on high and see thy enemies in Ge(henna)
And thou shalt recognize them and rejoice,
And thou shalt give thanks and confess thy Creator."

VIII

Many things conspired to create a literature like this: centuries of disappointed political and social expectation, the enormous religious self-consciousness of the Jew—a fact unmatched in religion and racial history; a deeply rooted and intensely nourished patriotism always at the mercy of some alien power and so turned inward upon itself with a consuming passion; the tendency to ecstasy and rhapsody which is a particular element in Jewish psychology and, in its finest form, a creative element in all prophecy, all coloured by vivid imagination and unrestrained by scientific control.

So what began with Isaiah and the social passion of Amos and the tender and dear-bought understanding of Hosea, ended with Enoch and Baruch and the Assumption of Moses and the fourth Ezra. What began with moral and spiritual insight and social passion and a deep understanding of the meaning of God for the soul, and exhortations to quietness and confidence, and a tough-fibred confidence in justice and goodness and the saving power of obedience to the will of God, ended in an excess of imagination and a baffling mingling of hope and despair.

The Jew despairs of his world

The despair is plain enough on the surface. When a man in his passion for some better order and his feeling of helplessness in any wearing situation can see no better way out of it than the supernatural destruction of what provokes him, with heaven for his portion when the smoke and dust have cleared away, and hell for the portion of his foes, he is far gone in social pessimism and has lost the sustaining gleam of clear moral vision. Religiously the immediate pre-Christian period had at the heart of it this mortal weakness. It was divorced from reality and bankrupt in practical moral passion.

The Jew hopes in a Divine deliverance

Nevertheless, the element of hope remained. The Jewish mind had reached a strange pass in its persuasion of the way in which the saving power of God was to manifest itself—but it believed he would take the world in hand. It had lost the sense of the power of moral and spiritual discipline to save decadent civilization—but it did believe wrongs would be righted and devotion vindicated. It had no saving sense of the far destinies of the human enterprises—but it did believe the human enterprise in the hand of God. Its visions of the Kingdom of God were a strange mingling of gleam and gloom —but it did have a vision of the Kingdom of God. The Jewish hope had become the supreme expression of humanity's travailing longing. It was an opportunity for the future to lay hold of.

Jesus of Nazareth inherited the hope

Jesus of Nazareth and all the devout-minded Jews of His time inherited all this as a birthright. The Judaic world into which Jesus was born believed that Jehovah would deliver Israel and erect it into a glorious empire, to which a conquered world would be subject. They call this future blessed estate the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God, and they believed they would be ushered in in just such ways as we have already considered. Certain very practical consequences grew out of this belief.

It was a deliverance expectation, deeply rooted in the immemorial past of the race, supported by the authority of the prophets, richly coloured from many sources, splendid in contour, confused in detail. It was to be a corporate deliverance—their nation was to be saved as a whole and saved through the peculiar favour of God for the Jewish people. The world of which they were a part was to share nothing of the drama of deliverance—except the tragedy of it.

The expectation of the Kingdom was profoundly divorced from the general realities of life. The supernatural character of it implied this. The devout Jew always saw the Kingdom across an abyss. The interposition of Jehovah would make a sharp ending and a sharp beginning. All the shadowed side

of life would once and for all disappear. The world would, in one stupendous crisis, be emptied of pain, poverty, and oppression and be filled with boundless felicity; it was like a dissolving picture in which the time-worn would be gone while you watched it, and a celestial freshness restore the earth. You cannot root any such expectation as that solidly into the soil of the actual realities of life.

This expectation lent itself, on the side, to revolt and political method. If the Jew were consistent, he could not expect any rising of his against Roman overlordship to hasten the Day of the Lord. His despair of winning it with his own weapons led him to cast his burden on the Lord, but his expectations predisposed him to political discontent and even revolt. Whether he believed or no that he could force the hand of God, he was dangerously ready to try the experiment. If he should be persuaded that the Messiah had really appeared, he was ready to go out and fight Rome with the Messiah for his Captain, depending upon the Messiah Himself to bring the heavenly reinforcements into action.

And finally this expectation was wanting in sound moral passion. It contained within itself elements of religious enthusiasm and possible fanaticism, but there is often all the difference in the world between a sound moral passion and a flaming religious enthusiasm. And what is equally, or more, to the point, this expectation had too largely ceased, in any spiritual sense, to be religious. This situation furnishes, historically, the key to the teaching ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

Chapter II

THE CREATIVE MIND OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus began with the gospel of the Kingdom

THE Gospel according to St. Mark introduces the beginning of the ministry of Jesus with hammer-like sentences bearing upon one point. "Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the gospel.' " The gospel of the Kingdom, as Jesus preached and taught it, is just all this actual and inherited expectation, passed through the mind of Jesus, and taking from His mind the colour and quality of which the gospels themselves are the record.

When Jesus was done teaching and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, it was, in the deep substance of it, utterly transformed. We do not know the teachings of Jesus entirely —there is no debate about that. The gospels are a medium through which He is seen in a light refracted by the very elements which transmit it. We hear Him always as with the confusion of other voices; but we know enough to be sure of what He Himself contributed.[1]

[1] I should only confuse these studies by attempting any analysis of the gospel records or introducing any questions of New Testament criticism. I do believe the first three gospels, particularly, give us a dependable record of the mind and teaching of Jesus. When one allows for such enlargements and modifications as the more critical scholars demand, the actual elements which Jesus Himself contributed are still plain to be seen, clear enough to understand, compelling enough to command our respect and our reverence. Any reconstruction of Christianity which leaves out what began with Jesus so utterly, as a study like Guignebert's, or reduces Jesus' contribution to a colourless minimum, like Case, simply leaves us in the air. The Christian mind is, as this book is an attempt to show it, historically the creation of manifold elements; it has taken form and content from tributaries which have flowed into it from many hinterlands. But Christianity did have a source and a beginning. The historic Jesus is the source which, through

I

The significance of great ruling ideas

Jesus's teaching from first to last moves around the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven as a centre; but he never defined it in so many words. He did not need to. He was using a phrase which had the same general value for His disciples and whoever else would stop and listen to Him that, for example, America or Americanism has for us. Every age has its own range of ruling ideas. They are political, social, religious, economic. You cannot clearly trace their frontiers; they cross and recross one another; they met in general regions where the most careful thought cannot clearly distinguish between what is political, what industrial, or what is social and what religious. They are like the boundaries between Balkan States where a herdsman must take his cattle for summer pasture across his own frontier, and what is of no political concern in winter may, when the snows have melted, become an occasion for war.

And yet the mass and contour of these ruling ideas are as plain against the skylines of faith and thought as a mountain range, and attitudes and tempers drain down from them into the practical conduct of life as rivers from their watersheds. No one man creates them, they are created by the long action of national, social, or religious forces. They become awesomely impersonal, though numberless things which living folk have felt, or thought or sought, combine to make them what they are. They continue lonely idealisms and

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changing form and circumstance, have kept it Christian. If we are seeking historic parallels, they are not wanting. Buddha made Buddism, Mohammed made Mohammedanism, Jesus Christ made Christianity. More than that, if the key to the teaching of Jesus is in His reaction, to use a modern word, to the current ideas and expectations of the Kingdom of God—and that is the key—then the gospels are consistent and their report of Jesus' teaching is a dependable report. Christianity has too largely for long periods lost the control of the mind of Jesus but never because it had no way of knowing the mind of Jesus. This note should be a sufficient explanation of the method which is followed in the rest of this chapter. The chapter itself does not pretend to be a theological study; it is simply an examination of those elements in the teaching of Jesus which have bequeathed to Christianity its outstanding moral and religious content.

prophetic forecasts, a poet's song, or a statesman's programme —all funded in a word; they are always a force to be reckoned by everyone having any dealing with his own time, or seeking to understand the past. The Kingdom of Heaven was the ruling idea in Jesus' land and time.

No matter how masterful any man may be he cannot escape the drive of these ruling ideas nor entirely define them. Indeed, he does not need to define them, they are a medium of common understanding. But he may, if he be great enough, give them a new meaning and, if he be supremely great, a new direction. But he will do this only by the constant and suggestive play of his mind upon the ruling ideas of his time, and through his power to bring others to share his mind about them. From time to time the ruling ideas of an age pass through a personality great enough to receive and transform and redirect their entire movement, and thereafter they are never the same; they carry on with one marvellous thing more: what they took from him.

Plato did this for the current of Greek philosophy; Dante did it for the entirety of the mediæval mind; Abraham Lincoln did it for American democracy. If one should add a scientist or two, Aristotle and perhaps Newton and Darwin, one would have counted upon his five fingers all the men who have done anything like this in the way to influence the life and thought of our Western world. Jesus did just this for religion. The central current of the world's religious faith passed through His personality (how inadequate that word is) and became thereafter something new and supremely creative. Christianity is the current of the world's truest religion before His time, reissuing transformed from the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ.

The strategic significance of Jesus' position

He stood historically and in point of time just at the one spot which made this possible. The one religion of His time which had any deep rooting in the past, any pure spiritual content, any adequate conception of God, was the Hebrew religion. The Hebrew people, by the providence of God, if you want to say it devoutly, or through their

own genius and the peculiar circumstances of their history, if you want to say it abstractly, were the peculiar medium for a religious apprehension which set them apart from all the rest of the world. Judea was a small country and the Jews were a difficult and not highly considered race; but the past and future of religion met within their frontiers.

Concerning the direct simplicity of Jesus' method

Historically, Jesus of Nazareth became the one focal point upon which the past of the psalmist, the prophet and the lawgiver converged, the source from which religion flowed on transformed and reimpowered. One may calculate all the other vanished alternatives of history with a little power to calculate what might have happened; but one simply cannot calculate what the religion of Western civilization would have been without Jesus. And yet if we turn back to the Gospels to see how He changed religion and history, it is so luminously simple as to make us fear our own conclusions. Christianity in the plenitude of its power has been strangely unwilling to recognize how simply it began. The contrast between the complexities of Christian faith and the method of Jesus, between what the creeds recite and the Gospels portray, is profoundly arresting.

II

The differences of opinion, apparently too deep to be sounded, among the followers of Jesus Christ grow out of these contrasts; they developed during the long attempt of Christianity to understand His person. Other differences, less abysmal but divisive enough, grow out of elements in His teaching which are difficult to reconcile. Jesus used, from the first, contemporaneous understandings of the Kingdom of God, as a common denominator between Himself and His followers; He never essentially redefined it; apparently He never altered the programme of it essentially. We have no guide here but what the apostles said and did as they followed Him up and down Palestine, and what they said and did afterward. But there is no sign in any records which they have

left us, direct or indirect, that their way of thinking about the kingdom of God and its issues had been essentially changed after a sufficiently long and most intimate association with Him, save at one crucial point.

The crucial point of change

They did believe that He was the expected and anointed One; that the fulfillment of the Messianic programme was now in His hands and that He would carry it through and right speedily. They hoped, incidentally, to share the honours and emoluments of His Messianic administration. The testimony to all this too clear to be ignored, and the stronger for being very often indirect. But they were changed for all that and more completely than they dreamed. They were changed by Jesus' spirit and by His creative contribution to their ruling religious ideas; they were changed by what was timeless and spiritually supreme in His message, even though what He did for them was, for a season, more or less obscured by what was native to their mind, their age, and their environment.

There is always in the mind of any disciple whom any great teacher has led through a revolutionary experience a period of confusion. It takes time to adjust the new and the old, the old never surrenders easily. First it wants to be master altogether, then it wants to compromise, or else it seeks to prevail through some subtle adaption of the new to its own inheritances and understandings.

The system which Jesus undertook to leaven with His gospel of the Kingdom had an enormous power of resistance. It had long since lost its fluid and responsive power. It was supported by fears and hopes deeply rooted in the tenacious Jewish mind. The religious forms which contained it had become set and irresponsive to fresher moral and spiritual appeal. In the long contest between the priest and the prophet, the priest had prevailed. Judaism was bound by the letter of the law. That is a time-worn way of stating a situation which continually repeats itself. It would be as true of certain aspects of religion in our own time as it was two thousand years ago, and for the same reason.

Religion begins as an adventure, a search for God when

God is far and dimly felt; it is a moving passion for fullness of life, a pathetic search for some assurance of brooding kindness or considerate love at the heart of the powers which control our destinies. This quest naturally reacts upon the whole range of life; it formulates itself in standards of conduct, creates its proper creeds; it invests itself with the mystic appeal of sacraments, sings itself out in psalms and hymns, and appeals to reverent souls in the great beauty of liturgies.

Concerning Pharisaism

But there is always the tragic danger that the spirit which created for itself such a wealth of form should escape the forms it had created and the forms be left untenanted by living realities. Nothing remains then but corrosive conservatisms and a sterile obedience to authority. Religion itself becomes purely formal; cautious minds can do no more than turn over old inheritances. Details are magnified, and ceremonial, being always a substitute for living reality when living reality is at a low ebb, becomes a concern out of all proportion to its importance. And you have the Pharisaism of Jesus' time or any time since. Pharisaism is religion sitting by a cold hearthstone and protecting the ashes from the fire.

III

Jesus' method

The earliest of the gospels, Mark, makes no pretense of systematizing the teachings of Jesus. What He says is always incidental to some human situation, an aspect of His ministry of teaching and healing as He touches the needy life of His time. Jesus finds His suggestion or His text in whatever happens as He goes along. Someone asks Him a question and He answers it. His disciples dispute among themselves and He teaches them the secret of true greatness with a child in His arms. A rich young man goes away sorrowful, refusing to exchange earthly for heavenly treasures. And Jesus preaches a little sermon on a rich man and the Kingdom and the rewards which await His faithful followers. It is the picture of a teacher whose mind takes up every circumstance of life as an aspect of some vaster issue,

illuminates the footpaths and highways of Palestine with some glory of wisdom and understanding till they become roads to the Kingdom of God—or else to spiritual defeat and hopes undone and lost.

In time his teaching was made a system

Later gospels, like Matthew, assemble the teachings of Jesus and relate them to themes rather than occasions. The gospel of John focusses all He said and did upon the wonder of His person and His lonely mission as the Son of God. The gospels thus begin a way of dealing with the words of Jesus which has been going on ever since. They have been subjected to reflection and interpretation, enlarged upon and read anew in the light of changing circumstances, and built into theologies and systems of ethics.

A book like Wendt's *The Teaching of Jesus* is a representative type of the massive outcome of this whole process. Beneath His learned and searching touch, sayings broadcast to listening groups in a village street or on the sun-drenched hills of Galilee, become the laws and the constitution of the Kingdom of God, to be considered under such chapter headings as the Announcements of the Kingdom, God the Father, Saving Benefits of the Kingdom of God, Righteousness of the Members of the Kingdom of God, Nature and Advent of the Kingdom of God.

The mind of Jesus may be forced into a framework like that but always at the risk of losing the rich, free play of it and missing its deep rooting in His land and His time. And there is always a poetic quality in His teaching, not the little poetry of rhyme and metre, but the poetry which makes a lily a fragrant symbol of God's unfailing love, and wayside grass a symbol of the frail and perishing, and a barley field a symbol of the ripening destinies of the human order.

This also disappears before the scholar's prosaic touch. Only the gospels catch the light with which His words are garmented, the grave music of the beatitudes and the parables. It needs a poet to understand Jesus or else a spirit kindled with hope—or else an aching heart. Mark is nearer to Him in some ways than any of the other gospels in his artless portrayal of

a ministry which grew by going on, and evoked deathless words from the needs, the sin, the sorrow, and the hope of forgotten folk in Palestine.

IV

The key is the Kingdom

For the actual key to the teaching of Jesus, beside the occasions which evoked it, is always in His correction and redefinition of the ideal of the Kingdom of God. He took a religion which was beginning to die through the formal and sterile hardness of it and laid it open to God and truth and life. He broke down its encrusted ways as a man breaks a stone with a hammer. He began with precedents and echoes. "Ye have heard it said—but I say unto you." Religion cannot live in echoes, in "ye have heard it said's"—it must be always finding living voices and be stabbed awake by some transcendent "I say unto you."

The authority of Jesus

Jesus never gave a plain answer to those who inquired into His authority. I wonder if it were not because He saw authority itself as a dead hand, from which His people needed to be delivered by having their very demand for it ignored. He was His own authority. He began His ministry by saying to those who heard Him that with His voice old prophecies were coming true, and He never thereafter offered any authority for His driving challenge to the old order, save Himself and His father's will.

This is always the habit of creative personality in every region and particularly in religion. It is as if, from time to time, a man should become in himself a new point of departure for the entire direction of some great human interest, with no justification of himself at all save the assertion of his right to mediate some new revelation of truth or God. If his message proves to be a new revelation of truth or God, all the world presently recognizes it. Then, by the strangest of contradictions, the world goes back and casts the mantle of authority over his shoulders while denying it to some comrade of his alive among them.

So Jesus took the old law, the old ethic, and the old understandings of God and recharged them with reality. If we stand far enough back, we see Him correcting the popular expectations and understandings of the Kingdom of God just at the points where they most needed correction. He made righteousness, and not a Jew's birthright, the condition of sharing the Kingdom; He rooted it anew in the realities of life; He divorced the expectation of it utterly from revolt and political method; He baptized it with moral passion as with fire; He made it entirely, supremely, luminously religious.

He insisted that righteousness should be a creative spirit. He reached through the formality of time-worn ethical conventions to their living heart; He sought the control of the great motivations for Himself and His Kingdom; He was not afraid to appeal to old and tenacious motives. "What shall it profit a man?" He said again and again. He had no objection to a good bargain but it must be a *good* bargain; He was quite willing that His disciples should pile up treasures, but they must be true treasures; He sought the control of the driving forces of life.

He sought the sources of conduct

He not only sought the control of all motivation, He followed conduct to its hidden sources in thought and desire; He was mercifully considerate of the faults which go no deeper than a man's skin, but He had a searing judgment for the sins of the spirit; He loosed the lightning of His indignation upon pride and hypocrisy and sterile self-righteousness; He focussed all this upon His Kingdom; He told those who listened to Him that without vital goodness they could not even see the Kingdom of Heaven and so corrected an arresting limitation of the mind of His time.

V

He was not the first to associate righteousness and the Kingdom. That association was as old as the prophets and the psalmists and the religious writing of the last two hundred

years before Christ reaffirmed it. The Messiah is the stay of the righteous; He will preserve their inheritance. Sin and wrongdoing are to be banished from the earth and the holy will be "restored with life and be resplendent with light." So the Book of Enoch. The psalms of Solomon (70–40 B. C.) say the same things in a more metrical way; they echo a vaster music of nobler psalms, but they help us to understand the mind of Jesus' contemporaries.

The Messiah will be "a righteous king and taught of God . . . pure from sin, so that He may rule a mighty people." "He shall gather together a holy people, Whom He shall lead in righteousness . . . None shall dwell with them that knoweth wickedness . . . and there shall be no iniquity in His days in their midst. For all shall be holy and their king is the Lord Messiah."[2] But all this was wanting in practical application. The Kingdom is to be the community of the righteousness but there was no plain definition of what Kingdom righteousness ought to be. The mind of the time had unconsciously shifted from the ethical content of the Kingdom to its eminently desirable felicities.

The Kingdom and the Gentiles

Jesus challenged the popular persuasion of His time that the Kingdom was the peculiar birthright of the Jew. There was no entire agreement among the pious Jews as to the fate of the Gentiles. Some generous-minded teachers looked for their redemption, but "the prevailing view and the view that was strong and effective in later Judaism, was that all the Gentiles were to be destroyed or all that were hostile to Israel, while the rest were forever to rest under the shadow of Jehovah's omnipotent but pitiless supremacy, or to be converted to His worship."[3]

The second century before Christ was a little more generously minded but the next century took a sterner line. If the Gentiles were spared at all, it would be only to serve Israel. By New Testament times the Gentile has faded out of

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[2]All these quotations are from Charles without specific references.

[3]R. H. Charles, *Eschatology*, p. 165.

the Messianic picture. The more orthodox Jews denied any share in the Kingdom even to Gentile proselytes who had received full initiation into the Jewish faith. Some of them were even dubious about the fate of their brethren in Alexandria or Rome. The Kingdom was to be not only a Jewish family affair but a Palestinian affair as well. The tradition of racial righteousness and divine election had hopelessly limited the Judaic concern for the fate of the rest of the world; it had at the same time relieved the elect from individual responsibility for the outcome.

This may happen at any time under the spell of the same temper. An American, for example, might be so confident of the high destiny of America as to become quite oblivious to his own responsibility for that destiny. Manifest destiny is an always alluring and cheating phrase and, eventually, covers so many sins of omission and commission as seriously to endanger its realization. Jesus never in so many words denied His fellow countrymen their manifest destiny. His was a Palestinian ministry; His contacts with the Gentile world or with Gentiles either were few. But, toward the end of His ministry, He certainly tells His own people in plain words that they have forfeited their birthright. He does intimate that the Gentile may find a place in the Kingdom, His later parables do suggest the possibility of His Father's finding substitutes for the elect among the despised of humanity.

VI

The universal elements in the teaching of Jesus

The universal elements in the teaching of Jesus lie farther down. They are to be discovered in His conception of the Kingdom as a spiritual order; they are instinct in His superb disregard of class distinction, His willingness to cross any frontier of character or station to reach the soul of any human being; they are inseparably associated with all His teachings about the Fatherhood of God; they are the very logic of His passion for humanity.

Jesus makes character a condition of citizenship in the Kingdom

He related, beyond any possibility of misunderstanding, righteous character and Kingdom citizenship. John the Baptist had begun this. Christian thought has been accustomed to assign him a too formal part in the religion of his time. His office as herald in the drama of last things has little meaning for us now, who see that the drama was not played through as the Jewish visionary expected it to be. But Baptist John as a new prophet with an old fire in his bones is an entirely consistent figure. He saw from his desert haunts a time ripe for the Kingdom, and he saw no goodness in his time sufficient to supply a material for the community of the righteous. He called his time to searchingly practical repentances because he knew, as the prophet had always known, that you cannot make the Kingdom of God out of a generation of sinners.

Jesus began where Baptist John stopped. He addressed Himself to the mechanical and devitalized righteousness of His time; he reënacted old laws clause by clause. Beneath His transforming touch the Ten Commandments became a matter of inner attitudes and entire integrity of thought and motive. He condemned the righteousness of the time even in its most respectable and accepted forms as entirely inadequate for Kingdom's citizenship.

He recalled an age whose religion was almost wholly external, to forgotten attitudes of simplicity and trust; He demanded unfailing kindness in all human relationships; He rewrote old norms of conduct toward which many had been feeling their way, in the luminous beauty and simplicity of the Golden Rule. He held up to the light the Commandment which lies behind all the Commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." He taught that character, being a hidden commerce with God, is to be sensibly known by its fruits; He said in plain words that there was no door to the Kingdom of Heaven save obedience—such an obedience as He Himself illustrated —to His Father's will. A life like that, He said, need not fear

the shock and dissolution of temporal things; it has within it a solidity to endure.

These are the familiar fundamentals of the teaching of Jesus in the first three gospels. The gospels may not always agree in the detail of their report. The mind of Jesus had already, before any of the gospels were written, begun to pass through the mind of His disciples, taking shading and colour from the temper of those who remembered and reported them —but the substance is clear. Though we should like a great deal more, we have enough and more than we have ever yet lived out. He repeated His teachings as often as they needed to be repeated; He illustrated them by His parables and made them consistently and commandingly manifest in the entirety of His own life and ministry.

VII

There are just now great differences of opinion among New Testament students about Jesus' own conception of His part in the Kingdom programme. Accredited scholars go so far as to maintain that He never really meant to be accepted as the Messiah; others maintain that He did offer Himself as the Messiah, accepted everything which went with the Messianic programme and went to the Cross expecting to return in power during the lifetime of His disciples. This is a controversy into which I do not care personally to enter; it would serve no useful purpose here. But it is of record that His most intimate associates did believe that He offered Himself as the Messiah and did expect Him to return during their lifetime.

The temporal and the timeless in the teaching of Jesus

The attitude of the apostolic group after He had left them is a sufficient testimony to this. There were two elements in the teaching of Jesus, and the very great differences of opinion among serious-minded students to-day grow out of the proper distribution of those two elements. He was compelled by the very circumstances of His life to teach in terms of the mind of His own time; when the teaching mind and the taught mind are in two entirely different dimensions nothing gets done. Those who were closest

to Jesus and understood Him best accepted Him in terms of their inherited ideas about the Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom. That was a part of the time element in His teaching and could only be corrected by time; but there was also a timeless element in His teaching which the long issue of events would disentangle from its Judaic setting, make the leaven of a vital Christian faith and the ideal of Christian endeavour. But this was to be done quietly and in response to a direction of circumstance not then in sight.

Indeed that process of disentanglement is not yet accomplished and we certainly have no right to expect or demand that it should have been perfectly done two thousand years ago. Jesus may have taught in an expectation of the speedy realization of the Kingdom of Heaven, and directed His teaching toward more immediately practical ends than we have commonly supposed. The new righteousness upon which Jesus insisted was a righteousness to make a man fit for a Kingdom of Heaven soon to be realized but, by the very quality of it, it transcended all temporal circumstance and proved itself righteousness fit for all men everywhere and always, whether the Kingdom of Heaven comes soon or late.

I do not think that the ethic of Jesus was, as is maintained to-day in some quarters, simply an interim or waiting ethic, as if He were saying, "It is no long time now till your troubled earthly estate will be utterly changed. Meanwhile live as I tell you: forgive, suffer, be strangely patient, for it will soon be over. It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." It was rather a creative ethic; it established the spiritual and social qualities of the Kingdom in the souls of those who accepted Him and His teaching. "Become citizens of the Kingdom now in such ways as these," He said in substance, "and you will do more than win its blessednesses. You, yourselves, will be the incarnation of its qualities and fellowships. The Kingdom of God is within you."[4]

[4]The force of this argument is not greatly changed by taking either one of the disputed translations of this passage. Whether the Kingdom of God was within or among them, it was made real by their obedience to Kingdom righteousness and their revelation of the Kingdom temper.

Did Jesus consciously anticipate the historic future?

Here in sure and simple ways Jesus made all time His own, released new spiritual forces and created a new reality of religion. The line of His vision may, and I think did, take an eschatological direction. He may not have had in mind the far, historic future of which we are a part. There are passages here and there which seem to reveal Him as attended by shadowed uncertainty. "I do not know," He said more than once. But that does not matter. The greatest things are done unconsciously. The makers of destiny have lived and wrought with no sure knowledge of the vast outcome of their lives. They have taken their line—the future is God's. When a man says, "Go to, now, I will reshape destiny," it escapes his presumptuous touch; when he follows his light and fulfills his high part, seeing only the pregnant things about him, taking his appointed road with no concern about how far it goes, if it be only the right road for him, the centuries sometimes assemble to do him homage, and history is redated from his birth.

If the Gospels, read with their time as a key to them, reveal anything, they reveal Jesus taking the dominant religious conceptions of His time, penetrating them with His insight, leavening them with His understanding; reshaping them through His own august authority and leaving His followers with a range of faith, and purpose capable always of being shaped to new uses and used in always new ways. The rest was theirs and God's and time's.

VIII

The enduring significance of the mind of Jesus for Christianity

As far as the Christian mind is concerned, the supreme significance of His teaching lay in its power of endless adaptation to always changing circumstances. He left His disciples with a spirit and not with a programme. They persisted for a while in assuming that there must be a programme, such a programme as they had been

taught to expect, but, in time, the programme was lost, as programmes always are, in new perspectives, and the spirit alone remained. Whether Jēsus' ethic, and by that I mean the entirety of the Christian way of living, was meant only for the brief earthly time before the Kingdom order should be realized, or whether it was a way of perfecting them for citizenship in the new order when it should come, it has proved to be the true way of life, strong to stand any test and persistent to survive any change in temporal condition. It was, and is, charged with a power to realize the Kingdom vision and establish goodness, happiness, and peace in our human fellowships not through the dissolution of earth and sky, but through the remaking of human nature and all that attends upon that.

What was right for the disciples of Jesus as they waited awesomely in the dawn of the Christian Era for the parting of the skies and the end of world-worn things, is right for those who have to live their lives out upon a little world whose far-off twilight is now a matter of astronomical calculation. Under the transforming touch of the spirit of Jesus the temporal becomes the eternal and the eternal the temporal.

Jesus' attitude toward revolt and political action

Jesus corrected the mind of His time in still another region, and in ways which went far toward ending. His own ministry on a hill outside Jerusalem. In doing this He bequeathed to the Christian mind the one element with which it is more seriously grappling to-day than perhaps in any time since Christianity began. Jesus lived and taught on the threshold of one of the most desperate and tragic revolts of a little subject people recorded in history. His time was seething with political discontent. Judea never accepted Rome; there might be individuals like St. Paul, who took pride in his Roman citizenship and sometimes used it as a shield, but the generality of the Jews in Judea hated Rome and all her ways and works. The Jew refused to be recast in the Roman melting pot. Pride of race, sense of destiny, intense

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religious devotion, social isolation, combined to create a situation which nothing in Rome or Judea could change. The Jew was desperately near the end of his power to endure.

Exile and the weary rebuilding of a ruined city, and a little time of troubled peace, and the pollutions of Greek rule, and the proud epic of the Maccabees, and a new subjection to another power had worn down his patience, and the patience of a Jew is hard to wear down. Was there no end to it all? How long, O Lord, how long? It is a most natural thing for men in a state of mind like that to take things into their own hands. A scant two hundred years before their God of battles had blessed the sword of revolt, why not again? The hot-headed patriotism of Jesus' time nursed great memories and plotted in secret. From time to time some little fire of revolt broke out, portentous tongues of flame from a banked fire. The Roman procurators put out the little tongues of flame, but the banked fire was another matter.

The power of religion and patriotism acting together

Now all this was stirring during Jesus' boyhood, young manhood, and brief public ministry. He could no more have been ignorant of it than a young man in Boston in the seventeen-seventies could have been ignorant of the temper of the streets of Boston. It would have been talked over in the carpenter shop while He mended a farmer's yoke and under the shadow of the synagogue. Religion and patriotism were running in the same direction, the hope of the Kingdom added fuel to the hatred of Rome. There was an opportunity, the historic solidity of which we are slow to sense, for some one man to fuse the forces of patriotism and religion and set the Palestinian hills on fire. When religion and patriotism move in opposite directions, the conscientious individual is broken beneath their strain. That happened among us a little more than ten years ago—it might become a force to be reckoned with in the future.

When patriotism and religious passion act together in full force, a nation will bleed itself white. Now religion and embattled patriotism were drawing perilously near to each other in the time of Christ. Any commanding religious movement

might pass easily, inevitably, over into political revolt, particularly when the religious movement centred about the expectation of a Deliverer. If a man thinks God is stirring to unsheathe His sword for his liberation, it will be strange if he does not reach for his own.

The real temptation of Jesus. He refuses any short cut to the Kingdom

Judea was reaching for the sword and Jesus knew it. He had only to proclaim His Messiahship and give it a political direction, and He might have begun a revolt at the outcome of which we can only guess. Here was a temptation which was terribly real.

One needs to take great care about what he reads into the narrative of Jesus' temptation, but beyond debate it reflects the line which He finally decided, after a struggle which reached the hidden centre of His soul, to take. He refused the possibility of any power which did not grow out of spiritual loyalties. He put away the sword as an instrument of conquest, once and forever. He dissociated the glory of the Kingdom from the glory of conquest and His methods from the methods of political intrigue.

He took every opportunity to quiet the heated spirit of His time. He avoided every occasion for releasing the stored and dangerous passion of revolt in the crowds which attended Him. He preached a doctrine of nonresistance which has so far been an unassimilable element in His teaching for militant civilizations. He would not have the mortar of His Kingdom tempered with the blood of the dead—unless it was His own blood.[5]

IX

He made, as it were, a new assignment of responsibility. His disciples and all who sought the Kingdom had no other responsibility than to perfect themselves for its citizenship, for it was God's good pleasure to give it to them. They were to seek it to the forgetting of everything else. But they were not to take it by violence, since they could not take it by

[5]Simkhovitch's *Toward an Understanding of Jesus* elaborates this line.

violence; if they did, it would not be the Kingdom. He saw any Kingdom so won foredoomed to failure—a plain truth we are strangely slow to learn. Since they lived in a time of violence, they had but one straight course to follow. They were to count it all joy when they fell into persecution; they were to offer the unsmitten cheek for another blow while the smitten cheek was still stinging; they were to go with force till force was weary and then go on a mile besides; they were to give till they had nothing more to give—and then give themselves.

Here once more the mind of Jesus is woven of the temporal and the enduring. I should thoroughly agree with all students of the life of Jesus who find a most intimate relation between this aspect of His teaching and the temper of His own time. He was throwing His whole force against political revolt and He was taking a great risk in doing it. He was carrying Himself into a position where He would satisfy nobody—He would not satisfy the patriot who wanted action, nor the shrewd Jewish leaders in Jerusalem who feared action, nor Pilate for whom any Jewish teacher with a crowd around him was a potential source of danger.

Why Jesus was crucified

In the end the patriot, the conservative and Roman authority crucified Him between them, and all of them playing at cross purposes. The dreamers of the Kingdom crucified Jesus because He would not give them the Kingdom their way; the religious conservative crucified Him because He endangered political conservatism, which, as a matter of fact, He was really trying to sustain. They crucified Him also because He seemed to be assailing the old religious order when, as a matter of fact, He was really trying to sustain that, too. Pilate crucified Him because he would not trust his own intuitions and believed the accusers of Jesus when they indicted Him as an enemy to the state.

You may say that He was crucified as a nonresistant or because He was the centre for dangerous popular discontent, or a mordant critic of the manners and morals of the religious leaders of His people. You may say, as the Church has always

said, that He was crucified as the Son of God, dying to save the world. But you cannot separate the stark fact of the Cross from its deep setting in the fact and temper of Jesus' world and its deeper setting in His own spirit. The mind of Jesus, and I recognize the inadequacy of the phrase, was a Cross-bearing mind. He accepted the full burden of His time, its stupidities, its moral faults, its spiritual sterility and its fierce drive toward power. He met it marginally with all that way of teaching which I have sought inadequately to outline; but He met it centrally with His own power to love, to suffer, and to conquer through suffering love.

The Cross the true revelation of His mind

He left the Cross as the enduring expression of what was deepest in His mind, most divinely native to His spirit. His death upon the Cross gave a permanent power to the revelation of His mind, without which it is impossible to conjecture what would have happened to the mind of Jesus. The Church has found many meanings in the death of Jesus and never been able adequately to tell what it found, but the least theological interpretation of it is probably truest to the essential unity of His whole earthly ministry.

Any man's mind is far more than what He knows. It is his way of choosing what he wants to know and also his way of knowing what he knows. It includes his moral attitudes, his ethical insights; it includes his emotions and volitions; it includes his sense of power and values. Any man's mind is, after his own fashion, just his way of approach to truth and reality and life, and what he does with what he makes his own.

When man has the mind of a scientist, its quality is not to be tested merely by the range and accuracy of his knowledge; it is to be tested by what we call the scientific approach and the scientific confidence and the scientific sense of reality and the scientific estimate of values. So with the poet or the philosopher, the theologian or the man of affairs. The mind of Jesus, which is so much more than the mere "knowing" of Jesus, accepted the Cross, not only because it lay in the line of duty and consistency, but because it was His way of con-

quest, His final revelation of what He lived for and cared for. The Cross was the last thing He had to offer to the drive of the world. He broke the drive of the world with His Cross, which is only another way of saying that He broke the drive of the world with His stainless goodness, His terrible meekness, His unconquerable love. A new force of love and life and goodness began immediately to rise from the foot of the Cross, as from a source, and to carry the mind of Jesus down the channelled future with it.

His Cross crowned His work and ever since Christian faith, interpreting the mind of Jesus through the revelation of the Cross, has accepted it not as the mind of a man, but as the mind of God for sinful men.

The friends of Jesus did not reassemble after His crucifixion at the place where the Cross had stood; the sense of the sanctity of that hill grew slowly. The persuasion of His resurrection and not the pity of His death empowered them to continue His work, but they felt themselves from the first guardians of a supremely significant trust. They treasured the memory of a comradeship all too brief, the disclosures of a power beyond their own; they treasured sayings they did not understand; they treasured old things which they possessed before He came and which they kept after He left them. But as far as the future of Christianity was concerned and the future of religion and, maybe, the future of humanity, their great trust was the mind of Jesus.

X

The adequacy of Jesus' mind to any human or historic situation

The mind of Jesus spoke in timeless tendernesses and pregnant humanity. He enjoined and illustrated in Himself a kind of goodness which is at once the inspiration and despair of the saint; He released forces which have in them the power to transform the whole range of human relationship. His ruling ideals are wide enough to cover every situation. They may be interpreted and applied

anew as new occasions arise for their application, for they are a light from beyond the horizons of time, to fall with luminous authority upon every new historic horizon and rise in each recurrent dawn of new epochs and orders. The light of His truth is always there.

There are now range upon range of adjustments not in sight in Jesus' time. He said nothing of a hundred things which are the headlines of our newspapers, but because something of what is crucial everywhere and always, in any human relationship or any human enterprise, was resident in Galilee or Samaria or Judea He reached to the heart of it in a word, a touch, or even a silence—and left us a spirit for every occasion, a guiding light for every untrodden road.

Jesus' Way

In such ways as these, then, Jesus gave His mind to His disciples and through His disciples to the world. He began with what was of supremest concern to them and to Him—the Kingdom of God—and, with that for His theme, He taught them a new goodness, planted new tempers deep within them, made a law of love and fitted them for citizenship in God's order. He taught them patience and the conquering power of meekness. He told them plainly how nothing divine or enduring can ever be won save through a sharing of the Divine Spirit. He supplied them with no weapons by which to conquer save the truth of His teaching and His way of life and His revelation of what life ought to be, and their own force to endure and to suffer kindled by His example. The very form of His teaching lent itself to the marvellous outcome of His message. He set forth in brief, almost gnomic pronouncements the categorical imperatives of life fit for any time or situation.

His vivid, devout, unqualified way of teaching made His words like feathered arrows, going straight to the point and with a winged power to escape the gravitation of time. If He had wrapped His great injunctions in argument and qualification they would long since have been lost in the dust of forgotten things. He shot them straight at the hearts of men—their reluctant wills would be sure to furnish qualifications enough.

What He was gave supreme meaning to what He said and did

But if you seek the more imponderable secret of His bequest to us, it is far deeper and more pervasive than all this. It was the saturation of all He said and did with what He was, which is true of all great teaching and all great teachers, but truer of Him and His teaching than any other. It is not alone our reading back into His lines our present reverences and devotions. It was something there to begin with, which led everyone who saw and heard Him to feel it, and pass through and behind His presence to some hiding place of power, some source of supernal goodness and wisdom, some true essence of the Divine—as the Greek creeds tried long after to say. Which led those who knew Him best and dared trust their understanding to say, "Truly Thou art the Anointed, the Son of the Living God."

Concerning the true record of the mind of Jesus

The Christian Church, when there would be a Christian Church, was bound sooner or later to demand an account of all that they remembered, written down for all the followers of Jesus to share. In due time, and in such ways as scholars are now trying to discover and explain, the Church got into the gospels as much of the mind of Christ as can be put on paper or parchment at all, which is a very great deal. But the mind of Jesus was never meant to be a book mind, it was meant to be a living mind, reincarnate in those who find in Jesus the way and the truth and the life, and meet truth and life and reality as He met them, each one after his own power. The true record of the mind of Jesus in the apostolic group is not what they presently made of Him, but what He made of them.

The true continuance of the mind of Jesus is in the spirit and the way of Christians. He never taught, so to speak, in the air. He always sought to change those who heard Him in definite directions and secure the response of a transformed life. The mind of Jesus, so far as any seize it and live it, is patience and love and inner goodness ripening in grace and beauty of character. It is utter teachableness and the supreme concern for spiritual values. It is a secure, unargued sense of

the nearness of God. It is always a humane concern for humanity. It is fundamentally opposed to hard, high-handed ways. It believes in and seeks a divine order to supplant the poor embattled ways of humanity. It carries on in the persuasion of the eternal issues of life.

XI

Actual Christianity should be His mind reincarnate

This was and should be the real Christianity, the one thing for which, as nearly as we can make out, Jesus spent Himself. As long as the Church was poor and persecuted, having no power at all but the power to conquer through its endurance and its terrible meekness, with no interests but the interests of loving goodness and no commission save to live in some sense of the nearness of God, the Church did keep the mind of Christ. Then it began to lose it—never entirely, of course. If the mind of Christ had been entirely lost, there would have been no Christianity anywhere, anytime.

How Christianity began to lose the mind of Christ

But the Church did lose the mind of Jesus too largely. It lost it in a concern for doctrine, natural enough, inevitable enough, but tremendously costly. The Church substituted a mind about Christ for the mind of Christ and tested discipleship by the subtleties of Greek creeds rather than by the Christian spirit and the Christian way.

The Church lost the mind of Christ in an excessive concern for its own life, forgetful of His warning that those who are too anxious to save their lives shall lose them. Organized Christianity has too often shown a love for power and a temper of self-assertion, profoundly contradictory to the spirit of the Cross which the Church had taken for its heraldic sign; the mind of Christ has been lost in pride and intolerance and the administration of great possession. It has been lost in sacraments which hardened down into form, obscured in mystic experiences detached from the practical realities of life.

There have been considerable periods in the making of the Christian mind when the mind of Christ seems entirely to have fallen out of sight; there have always been regions in the Christian mind where the mind of Christ has been subordinate to almost everything else. The story of the losses and recoveries of the mind of Christ would make a book in itself, and the title would be always misleading, for the mind of Christ, though often deeply overlain, has always persisted at the heart of the Christian enterprise and been the secret of what essential Christian reality it has ever possessed.

As one considers the whole process now from the vantage point of two thousand years afterward, one sees how inevitable it all was. The mind of Christ was in its entirety a new approach, a new appeal, a new revelation, a new command; it has had against it—especially in Western civilization—all the mind of a dateless past. The forces and instincts which it came to supplant are very deeply rooted. The mind of Christ was entangled in the very circumstance of the time out of which it issued; it had no way of reaching the world save through the minds of those who did not fully understand what they reported and began immediately to colour it with what they brought to it. It also met from the first, and still meets, the unyielding hostility of the old world.

Jesus Himself foresaw all this. He was, He said, like a sower who goes out to sow broadcast on a Palestinian hillside to meet the chance of rock and road and predatory bird and old usurping growths. And yet there was nothing for the sower to do but to scatter His seed and trust to the seed and soil and time for the harvest.

Jesus left His mind to humanity and trusted its strength

That is exactly what Jesus did. He sowed divinely to our human soil and left the issue to the unconquerable vitality of His teaching and the slow course of time. Or else He said His mind was a leaven to be hidden in what it was presently to transform and left to do its work. The mind of Jesus has done its unresting work. Every figure fails us here save the simple statement of the truth. The mind of Jesus has asserted a widening empire over the conduct

and faith of great civilizations. Where it is not accepted it is a challenge supremely to be reckoned with, and though we are as far or farther from the end than from the beginning, one may anticipate, if the past is any criterion at all, a future in which the mind of a Galilean carpenter will have controlled the faith, the fellowship, and the hope of humanity.

Chapter III

THE MIND OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH. CHRISTIANITY AS A MESSIANIC HOPE

The hidden power of apostolic Christianity

If a clear-visioned observer had looked the world through two thousand years ago to find a force destined to remake history, he would never by any conceivable test have backed the handful of men whose leader had just been crucified in Jerusalem. There was little in their personal force, less than nothing in their bewilderment, and apparently nothing in the movement with which they had been associated, to assure them of any future. And yet of all men in the empire they were the most significant. They held in trust the mind of Jesus, the personality of Jesus, the Cross of Jesus, and the mandate to carry on His cause. The currents of Western history, though they did not dream of that, having no concern for Western history, were drawing toward them in fateful ways, and the isles of the sea were waiting for them. But who could have known that two thousand years ago?

I

How the apostolic group began

The apostolic group reassembled in Jerusalem to continue the cause Jesus had left them actually went on with what was most deeply established in their own minds. The contour of the Book of Acts proves this, with a good deal of direct support from the Gospels themselves. We gain nothing, on the whole, by taking these records apart and trying to put them together again. The Book of Acts was undoubtedly written with a purpose. Streeter and Ramsay both agree in finding it an account of apostolic Christianity to placate the Roman mind, at

a time when the attitude of the Roman authorities was becoming dangerously problematical.[1] But this ought not to modify essentially the situation which the earlier chapters of Acts reveals.

The revelation of the mind of the apostolic leaders in Acts is consistent with the Gospel accounts of the minds of the disciple group before the Crucifixion. They were expecting the Kingdom then. They were still expecting it at the end of the New Testament period. The first followers of Jesus organized their faith and their programme out of their inherited Messianic expectation. They organized their faith and the programmes around Jesus Christ in whom they believed the Messianic prophecies to have been fulfilled; He was the keystone upon which their faith and their programme locked up. But the foundations of their structure were Judaic.

The risen Christ the keystone of their faith

Their assurance of the Resurrection of Jesus reassembled and reassured them. It gave them heart to go on and furnish them the one strong support without which all their hope would have lain in ruin about them. The risen Jesus was actually now the keystone upon which their faith and their hope locked up. They believed Jesus would come back to finish what He had begun, and they believed that they had His authority for this confidence. He had taught them patience; He had rebuked their heady ambitions, but He had not denied them the hope of the Kingdom or even their own thrones; He only showed them the true steps by which to climb them.

The bequest of Jesus

He did leave them a vitalized and transformed ethic. He left them new tests and rules of righteousness. He left them the Sermon on the Mount and parables of love and forgiveness and true repentance, and strangely deep and tender human kindnesses. He had given them entirely new ranges of values; He had showed them how to wear down force and hate by the sacrificial opposition of an entirely different spirit through His own demonstration of it upon the Cross.

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[1]Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 539. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman*, pp. 305 et seq.

He had taught them that political action was not their road to the Kingdom, nor armed revolt; He taught them that the Kingdom is no birthright monopoly secured to a Jew because he was a Jew and denied to the Greek because he was a Greek, though they were slow to profit by that lesson. Neither was it to be the sure possession of the great or the wise or the reputed good.

He left them besides the haunting wonder of Himself. They remembered all this as they awaited His further purpose, but they did not immediately change their ways. They were still Jews, and they continued for a season the religious practices of their fathers. The temple must have been haunted for them by disturbing memories, but it was still their temple. There was nothing yet to displace their sacrifices and their prayers. But they were changed, and time was to reveal the significance of what they began immediately to release. There was some germinal spiritual force within them, a new power of creative adaptation to changing or challenging circumstance. They were old bottles but they did hold new wine; they were committed to the continuation of Jesus' ministry, not only by His direct command, but by the tenacious loyalty of the disciples to their Master. They were soon to make manifest a brave selflessness, which was the direct contribution of the spirit of Jesus to their own spirits and which was to remake history.

The whole of Christianity in a half dozen men

The situation was full of entanglements which only time could separate and adjust, but all the elements of Christianity were there actually and potentially in a half dozen men—the rest did not count. The Gospels were there, for they contributed their material, the preaching of the Gospel, for they were the first preachers; the power to organize, for they then began to create the Church; the wealth and wonder of Christian character, for they were the first Christians. The one great personality, St. Paul, under whose teaching Christianity was to take so significant departure, was not there but without them he would never have

set out upon the road to Damascus and all the roads which lay beyond Damascus.

II

The history of Christianity and the Christian Church is the account of the way in which this whole inner and outer situation grew into faiths and deeds and understandings. It grew through the arrest of some elements, the liberation and enlargement of others, the subordination of the occasional to the centrally significant and enduring. It became the whole long process of interplay—in countless regions of action and reaction—of the essential and timeless contribution of Jesus with the whole content of Western civilization. There has been nothing else like it in the world, but there was a short time when it existed in Jerusalem and Judea simply as a Messianic expectation.

The mind has a natural tendency to seize on those elements in any situation which fall in most easily with its old inherited ways. The mind of early apostolic Christianity, being for a season entirely Jewish, seized on all those elements in the teaching of Jesus which fitted in with its own understanding of the prophets and its own anticipations of the future. But the apostolic group made Jesus Christ central in all this.

The apostolic passion

They offered Him to their race and their time as the only One who could save their race and their time from coming disaster, and they did this with a passion which amazed those who heard them and a flame-touched power which won a really great response. When St. Paul came down to Jerusalem for the last time, the leaders of the Church told him that there were many thousands among the Jews who had believed.[2] At that time the Jewish Church must have far outnumbered the Gentile churches.

The apostolic message

They delivered their message with a direct and telling simplicity. Jesus of Nazareth, whom the religious leaders of the time had rejected and crucified, was the promised Messiah. Those who rejected Him had sinned a mortal sin, but, if they repented

[2]Acts XX–XXI.

and accepted Him, they would be forgiven and they and their children would be saved from the coming destruction.

Those to whom Peter and Stephen preached understood this appeal. If they were birthright Jews it was as familiar to them as any governing ideal of ours, any tenaciously held expectation of ours, can possibly be. If they were Jewish proselytes they had taken it over as a part of their adopted faith. Their response to apostolic preaching influenced every aspect of their fellowship. They sold their possessions and parted them to all men as every man had need, because no one was going to need them long. They met in the temple and invested old forms of worship with glad new meanings; they were the sons and daughters of an ecstatic expectation, for whom time and weariness were nearly done and the Day of the Lord might come with any dawn.

III

The general testimony of the New Testament

There is no need to follow this through in a detailed study of New Testament passages. We have no way of knowing everything that the Christian leaders of that period taught. We have only here and there a window to see through, but the windows are clear enough. The faith and expectation of the Christian group quickly centred about the return of Jesus Christ. They waited in patience, but questions arose. As the years went on and the faithful began to die without having welcomed back their Lord, the living began to ask what would happen to their dead. St. Paul gave particular attention to this question, assuring the disconsolate that when the Lord Himself would descend from Heaven, announced by the trumpets of God, the dead in Christ should rise first and "we [note the significance of the we] which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

St. Paul's changing mind

Eternal fellowship with Jesus Christ was kingdom and glory enough for St. Paul. With such teachings as these the Christian idea of Heaven begins to emerge. Paul outgrew the inherited

Jewish belief more completely than many of his more conservative associates, but he never reached an entirely consistent position. The passage quoted belongs to the first period of his development, in which he was fitting more distinctly Christian conceptions into an older Jewish framework. During this period he certainly expected the second coming of Christ during his own lifetime. His perspective begins to lengthen by the time he wrote Second Corinthians and his emphasis to fall a little more strongly upon the Resurrection; but he is still expecting the Day of the Lord while those to whom he is writing are still alive.

His letter to the Romans takes a vaster sweep. He is beginning to find a place for history in the Christian programme. The fullness of the Gentiles is to come into the Kingdom, a travailing creation will not be dismissed until it has seen the revelation of the Sons of God. The dead will have no longer to wait for the living to be delivered from the grave. They shall come into the possession of an immediate immortality. Toward the end Paul's winged faith took an enormous sweep. His Christ became Creator and goal of the cosmic order. The end of the whole process, finally reached, will be the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Long before this St. Paul had begun to kindle to the vision of a converted Rome, and the triumph of the Church carried to the Pillars of Hercules.

Other books in the New Testament reflect a central belief in the return of the Lord, the end of the age, and the tremendous adjudications of the Last Judgment with marginal variations. There is in some of the books a very considerable use of the Jewish literature of last things. In the Epistle of Jude there are quotations from the Book of Enoch and the Assumption of Moses. The twenty-five verses of this short letter reflect many things which do not belong to the direct Christian inheritance, as, for example, fallen angels preserved in everlasting bonds under darkness waiting the punishment for their rebellion. All this was later to find a very noble echo in Milton's *Paradise Lost,* but in the Book of Jude it is more valuable as a testimony to the way in which the imagination

of some Christian teachers, at least, was still controlled by the mighty drama, whose stupendous issue they believed so imminent.

The fate of the world and the wicked

Here, also, is the suggestion of eternal fire which has played so large a part in the belief of the Church about the final destiny of the inpenitent. The Second Epistle of Peter reveals much the same confidence, though with qualifications. The heavens and earth "are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men." But this expectation is held with a qualification. There is evidently among the faithful some anxiety as to why the return of their Lord is so long delayed. To assure the doubting, the Epistle introduces that elasticity in measuring time which has since been found so useful. With the Lord a thousand years are as one day and one day a thousand years. The promises of the Lord are sure, but He does not measure time as men measure it.

The Church begins to adjourn its hope

There is also the intimation that the delayed return of the Lord is to afford an opportunity for all to come to repentance. The writer of the Epistle, however, does not doubt for a moment that the Day of the Lord will come and the elements be melted with a fervent heat. In the general Epistle of James the coming of the Lord draweth nigh and with it a telling adjustment of unequal earthly material conditions. This doubtless reflects trying situations in the Church —the godless rich seem particularly the object of James's indignation. He draws a long indictment against them and sees the accounts balanced in the Day of Judgment.[3]

These selections show the general drift of New Testament thought. They do not exclude the general content of the Christian evangel. They do include the conversion of the individual to Christian discipleship and the extension of the Christian faith through the world; but they are still condi-

[3]Something of this general summary is taken from R. H. Charles's *Eschatology—Hebrew, Jewish, and Christian;* some of it is also due to a rather long acquaintance with the New Testament.

tioned by the expectation of the complete imminent fulfillment of the inherited Jewish programme. Only the conditions of salvation are changed. In the Jewish drama, the Jews are to be saved because they are Jews; in the early Christian drama, the faithful are to be saved because they have accepted Jesus Christ as the promised Deliverer.

IV

Two facts or forces were already in action to change the situation. All things continued as they were, the Seasons maintained their procession, the vivid and colourful world kept on about its various concerns, primitive Christianity began to feel that it had enlisted for a long war. The gravitation-like power of the general interests of life brought the early Christians back into the general current of society. The New Testament itself reveals the beginnings of this process of adjustment. There is a very practical body of advice in First Peter about the social, the political, and even the industrial relations of Christians to the Roman order, and Paul takes this line even more strongly. After the expectant have waited for a considerable portion of time to see the skies open, and the world goes on as always, they are very likely to return to the normal business of life.

The Church becomes non-Jewish

The second governing force which was changing the outlook of the primitive Church was the conversion of the Gentile world (and, of course, the ruin of the Jerusalem church in the destruction of the city). It was possible, undoubtedly, to convert Greeks and Romans to the Gospel of Last Things. Doctrines of "last things" have had a perennial fascination for the human mind. But this tremendous old expectation, with all the setting and misty splendour of it, was not native to their mind. They had no such reason as the Jew to wait for a supernatural deliverance. They loved their sunny lands and the mellow beauty of their old cities; they loved life itself. There was among them a great longing for deliverance, both from the weariness of life and their own divided souls, but they sought it through some reconciliation with the Divine. They

did not expect the world order to be destroyed to bring them personal peace.

The Book of Revelation ends the New Testament period

The New Testament ends, and the New Testament period ended, in a book of strange and kindling splendour—the Book of Revelation. The Book itself was born in the agony of early persecution; it recast hopes and speculations older than Christianity in a hotter fire than ever fluxed the earlier dreams and dramas of Judgment and Destiny. The Jew had never been so harried and tortured as was now the Christian; his faith, ardent as it had been, was cold and formal alongside the passion of conviction which made martyrdom a joy to the disciples of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Charles has shown us, with scholarly finality, the sources from which the elements combined in the Book of Revelation were drawn and how various they are.[4] It was really the creation of a crucified Church. The passion of it, the majesty of its phrases, the often unearthly splendour of its symbols, its visions of the final state of the redeemed who have come out of great tribulation to stand before the throne of God and the Lamb and chant their ascriptions of praise and wonder, make it more than a book to fascinate the scholar and puzzle the devout. It is a tremendous human document, dyed red with martyrdom and shining with faith.

V

It recognizes an invisible, and anticipates a visible, second coming

A definite programme shows through its pages. It does combine two conceptions of the advent of Christ which have since been separated in the general thought of the Church. "Every visitation of the churches, every Divine Judgment upon them, is regarded as a spiritual advent of Christ . . . but this invisible coming ends in a final advent visible to all. Of this visible advent the date is not yet revealed, yet it is close at hand."[5]

[4] *The Revelation of St. John*, Introduction, Secs. VI, VII.

[5] R. H. Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 401–412.

But the first visible advent is only a prelude to a tremendous action. Christ will defeat His enemies and will strip Satan of his power, binding him for a thousand years. A millennium will follow, apparently reserved for the martyrs of the Church, who will be raised from the dead in the first resurrection. This Messianic Kingdom is to be only temporary; Dr. Charles believes it the introduction of an element wholly alien to Christian doctrine. At the close of this millennial period all the powers of evil will make their last assault on the Kingdom of Christ, but they are foredoomed to failure, and, after their defeat, there will be a general resurrection of all the dead, and a final judgment, in which the wicked will be sent into endless torment and the righteous find their enduring felicity in a new Heaven and a new earth.

Now, all the elements which have since coloured the Christian outlook upon the final issues of the drama of history, and the individual issues of life as well, are in solution in the Book of Revelation. It would be difficult to overestimate its influence upon the Christian imagination. Perhaps its largest single influence has been just there. The expectation of a new Heaven and a new earth has lighted the weary way of the centuries. The confidence that no Christian constancy goes unrewarded sustained the martyr, who has seen through smoke and flame some gleam of celestial splendour. Christian hymnology has taken for its own the glories of the new Jerusalem and made them articulate in the great hymns of the Church since Bernard of Cluny. The reading in these passages has consoled generations of Christian mourners. Dim eyes from whose vision the things of earth and time have begun to recede, have looked away from their fleeting shadows to the Gates of Pearl.

Christianity has really created two lines of belief about last things

But as far as the content of the Christian mind is concerned, all this, while quite true, is too general. Christianity has really finally created two eschatologies; one of them centres about the Second Advent, the other about immortality with its consequent rewards and

punishments. It is possible to hold both of these at the same time; they are not mutually exclusive. But a Christian belief in immortality does not necessarily involve a belief in the visible Second Coming, with the fulfillments of history therein anticipated. And one may say in a sentence that the more general belief, while not displacing the first, has generally taken precedence over it.

The Church of the Fathers still believed in the speedy return of Jesus Christ

The strongly held hope of the early Church in the speedy visible return of its Lord faded slowly. Only a scholar, thoroughly familiar with patristic literature, would be able to place all the references and build out of them a consistent summary. S. J. Case has done this in a short and solid way in his article on Second Adventism.[6] The earlier Church Fathers expected their own age to end soon. One of them, at least, began that process of dating it by ingenious combinations of figures which still persist. But the Church was coming into a changed mind; it was beginning to establish itself strongly, had an always increasing confidence in its power to win and transform the world and, finding a natural joy in the enterprise, had no desire to see it terminated.

The Second Advent was kept as a test of faith and written into the churches' creeds, but the expectation of it was adjourned to an indefinite future. Origen, who spiritualized so much in the Bible, sometimes at the cost of literal accuracy, spiritualized its teaching about the Second Coming. Augustine, with his solid historic sense and his far vision, sees the Kingdom already established by Christ's first advent and realized in the Church. "Therefore, the Church even now is the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of Heaven; accordingly even now His saints reign with Him. . . . It is then of this Kingdom militant, in which conflict with the enemy is still

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[6]Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.* I make no apology for using the admirable articles of this encyclopedia to obtain summaries to which one would otherwise have to give a very long period of difficult investigation.

maintained, and war carried on with warring lusts . . . that the Apocalypse speaks in the words just quoted."[7]

VI

Augustine's two great accomplishments: He entrenched Latin-Catholicism in the Gospels

Augustine's identification of the Church with the ideal earthly Kingdom of Christ did leave room for the belief that after a thousand years of Christian history, the final coming of Christ in judgment might be expected. But it also put the very solid fact of the Church in the foreground to hide from the faithful the shadowy expectation of a supernatural kingdom. Augustine really did two controlling things in his City of God. He so identified the Kingdom and the Church as to make it possible for the Latin-Catholic Church to offer itself as the fulfillment of prophecy and the realization of the mind of Christ. A church which found itself foretold and exalted in every gospel reference to the Kingdom held, and holds, a strategic position of entrenchment in the very substance of the Gospels—as long as the Christian mind grants its premise. This goes far to account for the diminished emphasis upon the Second Coming in Catholic theology.

He created a Christian philosophy of history

But Augustine also created a Christian philosophy of history, the influence of which cannot be overestimated. The Middle Ages knew no other. The Catholic Church used it for a background. Bossuet took and adorned it with his genius as a preacher as he pronounced his funeral orations over the royal dead of France. A pope used it in a letter on the Christian Constitution of States in 1885.[8] It has a range beyond the form and curious argument of it, a range of penetrating vision. His City of God can be created by faith

[7] *The City of God*, Bk. 20, Pt. 9. "The work of Augustine virtually eliminates all realistic Second Adventism from the main stream of Catholic thinking." Case, Hastings's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.

[8] Marcus Dods, *The City of God*, "Nicene Fathers," Introduction.

and obedience "in this fleeting course of time." He knows that what is seen and touched and used and lived in is created out of vision and love. He sees some splendour of God's order taking form through the confusion of history and life as real here as hereafter. "Accordingly, two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God: the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. In the one, the princes and the nations it subdues are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in love, the latter obeying while the former takes thought for all. The one delights in its own strength; . . . the other says to its God, 'I will love Thee, O Lord, my Strength.' "[9]

Here Plato's Republic and the New Jerusalem are fused in the Christian hope. The philosopher, touched and changed by the Spirit of Christ, has become the lover and servant of men, the divine order is built first in the souls of men, then in their institutions. It is rarely given a man to touch the final; Augustine does it in this passage.

VII

The end of the world expected in the year 1000 A. D.

But the expectation of the Second Coming persisted and has reappeared from time to time in arresting ways. It gripped Europe in the year 1000 A. D. Unfavourable seasons, widespread distress, famine, seemed to suggest that the patience of God had come to an end. The shadows of a great fear lay all across Europe and doubtless intensified the general state of distress. The single-heartedness

[9] *City of God,* Bk. 14, Chap. 28. It should be noted also and strongly that Augustine's interpretation is more true to what is central in the mind of Christ than the line he opposed. Two conceptions of the Kingdom are so woven through Jesus' reported teachings as to have really become the point of departure for the two conceptions of the Kingdom which have divided the Christian mind between them. A treatment not possible here would be needed to consider even the outlines of this. But the Kingdom of the Spirit slowly ripening through transformed character is certainly in the Gospels, and supremely.

with which Europe gave itself up to the Crusades may possibly have been due to the desire of Christendom to be in possession of the holy places in Palestine before the return of the Lord.

The Eleventh Century began with kinder skies and a renaissance of human hope. The Crusaders grew more interested in keeping Jerusalem for themselves, or getting it back after they had lost it, than in winning it as the capital of a Messianic Kingdom. The world went on about its business, and the Church began to build cathedrals as solidly and beautifully as it knew how, and the expectation of the Second Advent retreated before the towers of Notre Dame and Chartres. It came to the front again before the Reformation. The renaissance of it has generally been associated with some period of social distress or general disaster. It is almost sure to follow any period of general wars—the Napoleonic wars and the World War, for examples.

For reasons easy to understand, a Protestant school of thought has fastened more tenaciously and literally upon the Second Coming than the Catholic mind. Since the Reformation the end of the world has been dated again and again, for there is a type of mind which seems fascinated by the endeavour to make accurate chronology of the apocalyptic literature of the Old and New Testaments. Popular recurrences of interests in the Second Advent centring about strong and enthusiastic personalities are among the minor tragedies of religious life. More than once the faithful have prepared their ascension robes only to take them off again, disillusioned and impoverished. But there have always been others to take their places. It has all been strange and, from the point of view of those who have awaited and watched, a pathetic story.

Protestant thought and the Second Advent

Another school of Protestant thought has satisfied itself with the explanation that many of the Gospel sayings were fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, and has been content to postpone the hope of the fulfillment of the rest. There are many, and have for a long time been many,

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who spiritualized the whole matter. Such as these find the return of their Lord in every life devoutly obedient to His will and graciously revealing His spirit. He is thus always returning for them, and they expect no end of this little world of ours until it has lived out its appointed astronomic term and disappears from the celestial record, a forgotten planet, attendant upon a dead sun.

Modern critical scholarship is now reopening the whole question through a most painstaking examination of the sources, with a keen sense of its bearing upon the beginnings of Christianity and even the mind of Jesus. But the most eminent scholars do not agree among themselves. Until they do, and long afterward, for that matter, the Christian mind is likely to go on very much as before. As a matter of fact, Jewish Eschatology has always been an element difficult to harmonize with the more vital elements in Christian faith. It is the survival of an older order, conceiving not only Heaven and earth in terms which are alien to our understanding, but also conceiving history and the general outcome of the human enterprise in terms alien to our understanding. And not only in terms alien to our understanding but in terms alien to what is most central and essential in Christianity itself; and yet, if this element were taken out of the Christian mind, it would profoundly modify it and in many ways greatly impoverish it.

VIII

Immortality, Heaven and Hell become the centre of Christian interest in the hereafter

The more vital and creative Christian faith has taken another and a richer line. Eternal life and timeless destinies were dissociated from the end of the world order and the Second Coming of Christ. Christian faith has vitally organized itself about a faith in immortality, the Last Judgment and the final dismissal of the saved or lost to Heaven and Hell. The material for this also was in the older Jewish sources, but

there was a general quality in such material which the Christian mind could take and perfectly shape to its own uses.

The mediæval builders wrote this in sculptured recitative above the portals of great cathedrals, where the drama of the Last Judgment silently challenged all who used those doors and touched the traffic or the pleasure of old city squares with solemn intimations of the ultimate issues of life. The Catholic Church matured it in great detail; but, with a sound human feeling that some defensible disposal must be made of a humanity neither good enough to merit Heaven nor bad enough to merit Hell, tempered an otherwise rigid system with the equity of Purgatory, which, for all the abuse of it, was for a thousand years a bright gleam of moral insight in the Christian doctrine of the final disposal of fallible human folk.

For as Dante voiced it, it was nothing else than deliverance achieved through discipline and pain and aspiring patience, which is all any growth in grace and goodness is, whether in time or eternity. Protestantism took over Heaven and Hell without Purgatory and has made hard going of the whole matter till, after a trying period of lego-moral mechanism, the clear visioned here and there began to see the issues of life, whether for time or eternity, in terms of character.

No article of Christian faith has more deeply saturated the Christian mind than the belief in immortality and final judgment. The general response of humanity to the Christian appeal was, for a long period, as generally motivated by the fear of Hell and the hope of Heaven as by any other motive. It is easy to exaggerate this; very likely it has been exaggerated. But any examination of great ranges of Christian preaching bears it out, and any knowledge of the general movements of the popular mind, as well. Christian hymnology is again a credible witness. If one were to take out all those hymns which echo the persuasion of immortality, our hymn book would be left poor. If one were to take out of Christian theologies all the teaching about reward and punishment, they would be greatly emptied of content.

The hope in which Christianity began has been merged in the "Scheme of Redemption"

In such ways as these, then, the Messianic expectation has been continued, or modified, to adjust itself to history and the needs of the Christian mind. Christianity has subordinated Messianism, strictly defined, to the scheme of redemption. But we must recognize that Christianity owes its first creative period to the hope of a quickly returning Christ. A religion may begin unrecognized by its time, unsupported by force and organization. Great religions have begun in just that way. But it must have an appeal great enough to win converts, it must fall in with some supreme need. It must find a current in the human mind and spirit to carry it out to power. The preaching of a risen Christ as the fulfillment of age-old hope, ready with any dawn to end injustice and wipe away all tears and establish an heavenly order above the wreck of temporal things, was a gospel to create apostolic Christianity. What was thus created held till another gospel, more direct and spiritual in its appeal, began to win the world.

IX

Christianity, with only a dim sense of its own mission at first, began to build its true order in patient and transforming ways within the fabric of state and society. I wonder if it would have had heart to begin if it had known how long and hard its predestined road was to be. The first hope held till a new hope caught and lost it in its vaster dawn. And yet the first hope was never lost.

What then is left of this old hope in which Christianity was established? There are naturally two answers to that question. One is the answer of accredited Christian theology. The Messianic hope has been fulfilled exactly as it was meant to be fulfilled. Ancient prophecies have come true in Jesus Christ. The events of His life, the outcome of His ministry,

the faith He created, and the Church He created with all involved therein are a part of the predetermined plan of God, and nothing could have been different. This is the Christian scheme of redemption. Everything else has been a prelude to it.

The curious forms which the Messianic expectation took were no part of the divine revelation, but the invention of human imagination. The Jew was on the wrong line and has paid his price for his mistakes. Beside that, the action is as yet unfinished and we have no right to judge the outcome of it until it is completely carried through. According to the demonstration of history, this is the proper answer, but it is not the whole answer.

The Messianic hope gave a character to a mere universal hope

Christianity found its departure in what it offered to a hope, which had been shaped not only by the vision and agony of a nation, but which, in some deeper way, represented all human hope, seeking a proper issue from the weariness and perplexity of life. It was the signal service of the Messianic hope to have given this mere general hope a definite expression, to have associated it with a kindling, and on the whole rather definite, programme. It is now practically impossible for the Christian mind to approach these more indefinite longings of humanity for deliverance through any other door than the door of the Messianic expectation and the Messianic programme.

Christianity may do the best it can to disassociate all this from its specifically Jewish elements, but it can never quite manage it. Here, at least, the Jew can come back to the younger faith and might say: "In spite of all that has lain between you and us, for two thousand years now, you cannot dream of the future except in our terms. We have given you your Jerusalem the Golden, your millennium, your Kingdom of God, your expectation of final judgment, and not a little of the sense of shining or shadowed destiny which lies beyond." And the Jew would be right.

X

It has suggested a timeless issue for the enterprise of life

A hope so deeply rooted as the Messianic hope will end only when there is no need or place for hope. It has pushed back the barriers of space and time; it has touched all present history with the suggestion of the transitory and the imperfect; it has kept all that humanity which has come under the regnancy of it from accepting anything as final, save that in which the purposes of the Divine are fulfilled. We are still pilgrims down the roads of time, seeking a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We do not believe that God is done with His world, and we are always, if we are sensitive to the play of moral and spiritual forces, conscious of our own weakness, asking an aid outside ourselves if we are to find a victorious outcome to our endeavour. Now the Messianic hope has both strengthened this natural temper of ours and instructed and satisfied it.

It has greatly broadened our range of social and spiritual expectation. We have inherited, as has been said, a really vast deposit of hope. If one may follow back the sources of our expectation of a more ideal world they lead us to strangely contrasted watersheds: they lead us to Plato or Isaiah. Each one has bequeathed to us the conception of an ideal state or society, and each with his own interpretation and emphasis. Plato's Republic, which has controlled ranges of social idealism for two and a half millenniums, is to be man's own creation through the balance and clarity of his own truth-loving mind. Isaiah's redeemed and seminal remnant is God's creation through man's sensitive obedience to the Divine Will, and through the grace of God to do for men in their endeavour what they cannot do for themselves.

As far as one may calculate the might-have-beens of history, if Western civilization had not been controlled by Isaiah, the Hebrew prophets, the Messianic hopes, and the fulfillment

of it in Jesus Christ, Western civilization would have been controlled, at its highest point, by Greek philosophy and Platonic idealism. There was nothing else at that time great enough to control the future, and there has been nothing since.

In the historic outcome, we have been more influenced by Isaiah than by Plato, and this outcome has been saving; there was a force in what the prophet began and Jesus completed which philosophy alone could never have exerted. The sounder ethics were all on the side of Isaiah; the kings of the Greek states were to be philosophers, but the officers of the Jewish state were to be peacemakers and its exacters righteousness. The Messianic hope has left us a moral idealism and taught us to expect the realization of a more blessed human state in terms of righteousness. We have only to consider the authority among us to-day of conceptions and phrases which we have inherited from the Hebrew prophets to see our real indebtedness to them.

The pictured splendour of the Hebrew ideal has captured the imagination of the centuries, and whatever captures the imagination rules from a strong throne. Nothing lives long save as it does capture the imagination, and there is little in the Republic to make a man want to be a citizen thereof. It has no sense of the tears of things. The curious groups who gathered about Socrates in the streets of Athens, asking only shade and a marble bench to discourse of high things, were, if we may trust their reported speech, strangely untouched by the human unhappiness which must have passed them, incarnate in the poor and enslaved, while the afternoon shadows lengthened and the lights lay level across the temple-crowned Acropolis. Hebrew feeling went deeper, and though it lacked the clarity of Greek understanding and the very passion of it obscured its teaching, it knew, with the sure knowledge of deep feeling, that unless God give beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning, a king, though he be a philosopher, will administer an unhappy state. This also we keep.

XI

It has supplied a commanding name for an inclusive ideal

Hebrew expectation supplied a commanding name for an inclusive ideal—the Kingdom of God. It is doubtful if any phrase more rich in suggestion, intended to master the devout imagination, could be found. There is a splendour in it and amplitude and a note of authority and social suggestion and discipline and power. We do not find it inconsistent with our faith in democracy, or our pride in a republic. We feel that a republic might be also the Kingdom of God and be a better republic thereby. It is the resolution of the human order in terms of Divine will, at once soundly ethical and glowingly religious. We continue that. Christianity took all this over and gave it, as we have seen, a content of faith, spirit, and method. Though the centuries have sifted so vast and variously held a hope, as time always sifts hope, the residue is the one dependable element in our present confused human order. It is the empowerment of the humanitarian passion which is the outstanding phase of Christian idealism to-day.

Such an ideal needed to control human action

But it is more than that; it is a permanence of hope tested, disciplined, and unconquerably in action, deeply established in the teaching of Jesus and animated by His spirit, sustained by faith in His power to redeem and transform. It is a confidence that God is working in and through the human enterprise toward an outcome consonant with the cost and travail of it. It touches all the horizons of the future with a light which, if it were extinguished, would leave us in the dark. We demand some happy issue of effort if we are to be held bravely to our tasks. We are more largely motivated by our ideals than any other single thing. If Western society, especially, were to be emptied of the elements of spiritual idealization which Christianity supplies and left to its stark industrialism and its blind competitive drive for group survival,

no thoughtful man could contemplate the future without the gravest apprehension.

The last war showed us what tragic power of self-destruction is resident in an order uncontrolled by an adequate ideal, armed with enormous force and undirected by ethical and spiritual motives, and using God only to sustain its passion for combat. The most restrained analysis of the present state of our civilization shows us how little would be left, if the Christian passion for a Christlike world, rooted in old hopes and enriched in their rebirth in Christianity, were to die out from among us. We cannot possibly overemphasize the living value of what the prophets foresaw, Jesus Christ transformed, and His followers have since held and sought.

And in their vaster sweep these hopes and confidences light all the shadowed side of life. They sustain the hard beset in their personal struggles and comfort the sorrowing with the promise of a happier time. They assure the mass of humanity whose lives have no distinction that they are citizens of a Divinely imperial order whose glory touches even the commonplace with some foregleam of high destiny. And because, in all their long history, these hopes have looked across the horizons of time to the life beyond, they have brought the assurance of the eternal to compensate for the inadequacies and injustices of the temporal.

A hope which has established, in the programme of the Kingdom of God, the heroic ideal of a redeemed world and the confident expectation of the vindication of love and goodness in a timeless order is humanity's most precious inheritance.

Chapter IV

CHRISTIANITY BECOMES A DELIVERANCE RELIGION

The missionary passion of the primitive Church

CHRISTIANITY had from the first a driving missionary passion. The first gospel ends with an imperial imperative: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." The Book of Acts begins with the same command: "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth." The tongues of flame which play across the second chapter of Acts are a fitting symbol of the zeal which possessed the primitive Church.

Many things continued to create that passion. The Church believed itself acting under a mandate from its Master. It believed also that the time for making Him known to the world was short. He would soon be returning to claim His own, and upon His return the destinies of the world would be adjudicated. It was an enterprise demanding desperate haste and sleepless watchfulness. Many of the later parables of Jesus enjoin this watchfulness and picture the sad estate of those who would be found sleeping when their Lord returned.[1]

Christianity had also from the first a proud sense of spiritual sovereignty. The earliest New Testament documents reveal a Christianity absolutely persuaded of its world-subduing destiny. The new Christian principle of love

[1]Wernle notes a change in the missionary spirit of the Church by the end of the First Century. He claims that Acts, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Fourth Gospel "show no missionary interest in their own time." I do not see how he can possibly support his case for Acts. It is true Luke represents the Pauline mission as something accomplished, but that does not argue that the Church thought its mission finished. He is on safer ground when he notes a change in method. The Christian merchant or sailor becomes the Second Century evangelist and Christianity grows by individual contacts rather than organized missionary effort. But that does not deny the Christian zeal. *Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. II, pp. 2, 3.

supplied a powerful missionary motive. The love of the New Testament is a glowing good-will, taking no account of distinctions of race and creed, marvellously considerate of the forgotten, and finding in any kind of fault or failure but another challenge to its exercise. The need of the world challenged the love of the Church. Such forces as these combined to create the missionary passion of primitive Christianity.

I

Conditions which favoured the expansion of Christianity

But a flame-touched missionary passion alone is not enough. Worthy causes, strongly held and presented with consuming earnestness, have often found no great issue and have been blown as dust down the winds of time. The success of the Christian evangel is to be sought, not only in that evangel itself, but also in the strategic combination of circumstances which gave Christianity its opportunity.

The conditions which made possible the rapid growth of Christianity are the commonplaces of Church history. Harnack summarizes them with his exact and illuminating scholarship. Alexander's romantic conquest of western Asia was rich in consequences which outlived his dream. A comparative unity of language and ideas asserted itself through all the racial complexities of Asia from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean. Rome finished what Alexander began. When St. Paul set out from Antioch on his first missionary journey he sailed across a sea whose blue waters washed shores without a national frontier.

During the pregnant centuries from Christ to Constantine a sense of common possession and common destiny ripened through sun-washed land into a mellow unity of civilization. Ideals and ways of life were standardized throughout the empire. Travel was easy and constant. A Phrygian merchant thought the fact that he had made seventy-two voyages to Rome during his lifetime important enough to be inscribed upon his tombstone. There was everywhere a tendency toward the equalization of society. Old social orders were de-

caying and in their decay were forming the soil for new growths.

In general, Rome was tolerant toward any form of religious belief, though the bitter denial of that tolerance of Christianity has needed, first and last, a deal of explaining. Within the imperial organization of Roman society there was a development of group societies which offered the Christian church a hospitable opportunity, since those whom it built into its own organization were already accustomed to some form of organized comradeship. Other Eastern religions, having already invaded the Empire, made it possible for Christianity to enter through gates which they had opened. Roman life had lost a good deal of its former hardness, and the very softening of it, though it were the first anticipation of ultimate decay, made possible a penetration by a new spiritual order which a hundred years earlier might not have been possible at all. "The narrow world had become a wide world, the rent world had become a unity; and the barbarian world had become Greek and Roman."[2]

The master key to the imperial extension of Christianity

But what was happening to the very soul of this ancient order afforded Christianity an opportunity more strategically significant than the social and political setting of the stage upon which it was to play so great a part. The key to the imperial expansion of Christianity is to be found in the religious bankruptcy of the Empire and an intensity of longing for religious peace and deliverance—the full significance of which, always with its reactions upon Christianity itself, we are just beginning to understand.

II

The first chapter of Acts does represent the apostolic group commissioned to be the witnesses of Christ in "Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and in the uttermost part of the earth," but Christianity did not enter upon the world phase of its extension without a trying struggle with a strong element in its own fellowship.

[2]*Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. I, pp. 19–23.

The possibilities of a Judaic Christianity

The conservative group in the Jerusalem Church wanted to keep Christianity for those who kept the Jewish law, and there were Jews and Jewish converts enough everywhere to offer an ample mission field. Thirteen per cent. of the population of Egypt, for example, are supposed to have been Hebrew, the percentage in Syria was probably larger; ten thousand Jews were reported in Rome under Augustine. Harnack says there must have been four or four and a half million Jews in the empire when Saul of Tarsus set out from Antioch on the long and significant journey which finally brought him to Rome.[3]

But this is not the whole situation. The Jew had been himself a missionary, with a passion to win others to his faith equal to his intense religious conviction. Judaism had a religion to offer, nobler in every essential quality than any other religion in the ancient world, and since there were many then, as always, who were seekers after God and could not find Him on Olympus or in the Roman Pantheon, they turned eagerly to the God of the psalmist and the prophet. There is no definite way of calculating the number of Jewish proselytes; Scherer thinks there were millions of them and St. Paul found his first converts among those who made Judaism a halfway station in their progress to Christianity. They were naturally more spiritually sensitive and less bound by tradition than the Jewish born whose religion was an inheritance and not a glowing discovery. There was then no lack of a field already prepared for the Christian missionary if he desired to confine himself to the open-minded Jew.

Suppose the Jews had accepted Christianity

It is idle to speculate about what would have happened had a far past been other than it was. But we may wonder, for all that, what would have happened had the Judaism of the Roman Empire immediately and wholeheartedly accepted Christianity. The very elements in the situation and in the bequest of Jesus Christ which the Apostles took over, would have eventually compelled far-reaching

[3]Expansion of Christianity, Vol. I, pp. 2–10.

adaptations of the first proclamation of "the way." The Church would have grown weary—as it actually did—of awaiting parted skies and its returning Lord, and would have held the hope only as a light lying across the future's uncharted heights.

If the Jew had whole-heartedly accepted Christianity he might himself have been transformed and saved his race a long travail and much crucifixion of body and spirit, but he would at the same time have walled Christianity in with those subtle separatenesses which have for two thousand years kept him a race apart. One may honestly doubt whether Christianity would have become a world religion if it had so entirely won the Jewish population and the Jewish proselytes of the Roman Empire as to find in those millions the fulfillment of its own destiny. But it was otherwise decreed. The Jewish people decided the question for themselves.

A few thousand Palestinian Jews soon accepted Christianity in such ways as were consistent with their faith and inheritance. A group of them were not even known as Christians, they were called Nazarenes. They accepted Jesus as the Messiah foretold in the Scriptures, "soon to come again in power and glory to execute the divine judgment upon those who had rejected Him, and thus bring in the expected golden age." For the rest they were only pious and observant Jews, who worshipped in the temples and in the synagogues like others. They shared the fortune of Jerusalem in its ruin; their succession of authority was ended, the Church that replaced them was the Gentile Church, and thereafter they became a scanty folk belonging neither to the old order nor to the new, and so passed out of the picture.[4]

Why Christianity failed to win the Jew

The failure of Christianity to win the Jew may be variously explained; but I should find the secret of it in the religious self-sufficiency of Judaism. It had grown used to being different and gloried in it, making a divine decree of its isolation. Israel had been the conscientious objector of the centuries; the soul of a proud and gifted race, conscious of

[4]Geo. Foote Moore, *Judaism*, Vol. I, pp. 9, 91.

holding a supreme religious inheritance in fee, had been forged into fire-tempered tenacities through conquest, exile, and persecution.

III

Christianity could penetrate and dissolve the loosely held faiths of the classic world; it could not penetrate and dissolve the spirit of Judaism. Judaism wanted a Son of David to rule upon a throne celestial forces had established, but it was not eager for the blessing of the poor in spirit nor the mystic sense of deliverance through a crucified Redeemer. There are enormous regions common to Judaism and Christianity, but there are deep centralities of divergence which time has not yet been able to bridge over.

The stumbling block for the Jew generally was not only the Cross, but the element of universality which was from the first resident in Christianity, and to which St. Paul gave practical application. The frontiers of Judea and Samaria were too narrow for the destiny of it, just as a modified Judaism was too narrow for its ranging spirit.

Directly the Church established itself even so near to Jerusalem as Antioch, it became conscious of the Gentile hinterland and felt itself the possessor of a gospel whose issues were too vast to be bounded by the mountains which lay about Jerusalem. So Greek Antioch and not Judaic Jerusalem commissioned St. Paul, no saint then by any canonization of the Church, to go out and convert the world.

Paul began with his fellow countrymen

He always began his missions with the Jews. And they always ended by driving him out of town if they could. He won a more creative response from the proselytes, but he wanted Greece, and Rome, and as he reached for them he found an obstacle in a curious Jewish ceremony, which turned out the thin edge of the wedge which was to split universal Christianity from Judaic Christianity. The controversies which make certain chapters in Acts and the Letter to the Galatians still hot to the touch ended two thousand years ago. It is enough to say that whether or no the Jew grudged the

sharing of his Messiah with the Gentile, he demanded of the Gentile a form of initiation into the Church which was no part of Christianity and which would in the practical working of it have shut the Gentile out.

The character of the watershed, to change the figure, which turns the flow of a river toward the east or the west is no great matter: the main thing is that the watershed is there and contributes a direction of destiny to the currents which take their course from its slopes. We must allow something also for the epoch-making nature of St. Paul himself, the free play of his mind and his breadth of vision, through which whatever he contemplated fell into its own proper proportion, touched by a rare and mystic light. He was not a man to suffer Christianity to be shipwrecked on a ceremony. But one should not make too much of a detail. The real point in contention between Paul and the Jewish Christian conservative was Jewish legalism. Christianity, as he conceived it, was free and vital. It could not, and must not, be tied up with the mechanical formalism which had fastened Jesus to the Cross. That would defeat its essential genius.

Paul's mind had a winged quality and a love for far flights. The unexplored and unpossessed regions of faith challenged the gallant adventure of his spirit, as the lure of the galley or the caravan called him to strange harbours and far lands. If he had won the Jew entirely to the Cross, he would still have carried his standard beyond the frontiers of his own racial inheritance and sought to make it supreme as far as he had force to bear it. But he had to find an appeal to gather the nations around the Cross.

IV

What Greece and Rome were really seeking in the region of religion

Now a victorious religion is always a commanding response to some crucial human need. Despite all the Jews in the empire and all their proselytes, Syria and Greece and Rome were not seeking a Messiah to overthrow the world; Rome loved her empire and Greece her

sunlit beauty too much for that. They were longing for deliverance from the travail and weariness of their souls. The longing for deliverance is in one form and another central in all religion. Henry Osborne Taylor, in his extraordinarily suggestive study of Deliverance, has a very noble passage on the variety of forms which the quest has taken: "For one man shall find his peace in action, another in the rejection of action, even in the seeming destruction of desires. Another shall have peace through intellectual inquiry, while another must obey or love his God."[5]

The Meaning of Deliverance

But whatever road the quest for deliverance uses, the goal is always the same. The seeker wants to be saved from his loneliness, his weaknesses, his sins, his sorrows, and his fear. Religion is the most wide-spreading and variously branched growth in the world, but the roots of it are deep in our dissatisfactions and our lonelinesses—and the endless contrast between what we are and what we would be.

The longing for deliverance ebbs and flows like a tide in answer to changing industrial, social, and spiritual circumstances. Forceful and prosperous times, able to realize themselves in a wide range of effective action, finding their satisfaction in the abundant possession of things, generally feel no urgent sense of the need of deliverance. There is nothing from which they want to be delivered—save possibly the fear of losing what they have. That is very greatly true of our own time, being an outstanding aspect of our contented and prosperous estate.

It is much the same with the individual. The strong and self-sufficient, able to get what they want, unconscious of their spiritual limitations and unplagued by high ideals, are not generally responsive to any scheme of Redemption. But when their strength begins to fail them and misfortune takes advantage of their diminishing defense, or some haunting sense of dissatisfaction clouds the bright prospect of their lives, they begin to reach out for a power to save them.

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[5]Henry Osborne Taylor, *Deliverance*, p. 4.

The world weariness of the first Christian centuries

When old orders begin to break beneath and about us and the sense of the mystery of life oppresses us, when a great civilization has grown old in futile endeavour, or when there is some general sense of the inadequacy of the human estate, then in one form or another a longing for deliverance comes back like the tide at the equinoxes. Christianity began in a time like that. Some age-old weariness lay like a shadow across the otherwise sunny lands over which the Roman eagles ranged.

The witness of Marcus Aurelius

Besides the epistles of St. Paul we have no confessional literature from that far-off time save one classic which belongs to a later age. The meditations of Marcus Aurelius are a window through which we see many noble and moving things, and this very clearly—the mere possession of power never contents the soul. The race which ruled the world was growing slowly conscious of a need the empire of this world could not satisfy, and the people found what issue they could from their disquiet. Most of them used their wealth and power grossly to satisfy their senses and forgot their souls, but Marcus Aurelius and a few like him found their deliverance in their power to endure.

Since there was no escape from the weariness of life, or even the pain of it, a man could take it like a soldier, hoping, perhaps, for some healing in a life beyond the shadows, but with no sustaining confidence even in that. The best he could do was to retire within himself and make his self-sufficient spirit a citadel which the world could not invade, "for nowhere either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble does a man retire than into his own soul." But stoicism is too high and austere a way for the generality of the hard-beset, and, moreover, if a man does no more than save himself from being defeated he can hardly be said to have won a victory.

The witness of Plato

Long before Marcus Aurelius, Plato in his Republic makes Cephalus voice a timeless fear, "for let me tell you, Socrates, that when a man thinks himself to be near death, fears and cares

enter into his mind which he never had before; the tales of a world below and the punishment which is exacted there of deeds done here were once a laughing matter to him, but now he is tormented with the thought that they may be true: either from the weakness of age, or because he is now drawing near to that other place, he has a clearer view of these things . . . and when he finds that the sum of his transgressions is great he will many times like a child start up from his sleep for fear, and he is filled with dark forebodings."[6] And truly it may be that, in this clear, sad way, Plato speaks not only for himself but for the vast and inarticulate fellowship of the troubled spirits or the restless, who in St. Paul's time and St. Paul's world sought release from the weariness and mystery of life through the mysteries and made a drama of their deliverance. For the mystery religions are the most outstanding witnesses to the longing for deliverance which possessed the classic world and offered Christianity its supreme opportunity.

V

Reasons for the present interest in the mystery religions

Within the last ten or fifteen years Christian scholarship has turned to them with a new interest. This is due in part to the fascination of the subject; lost roads to old human interests are a perpetual challenge to the scholar. "Every endeavour," says Angus, "to secure news from the inner court of things, and to bring man into touch with the Eternal is of worth in our human story." It is due also to our clearer understanding of their importance as aspects of the endless quest for deliverance. Strange as they seem, gross as they sometimes were, they were still a shadowed stage in the road from self to God and no stage of that road can ever be wholly contemptible. But the interest is due in very great part to the insistence of a group of scholars, that these mystery religions influenced St. Paul to give a new direction to the development of Christianity.

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[6]Plato's *Republic*, Bk. 1.

Some scholars go much farther. They claim that Christianity took over from the mystery religions, and adapted to its own uses, a most important material without which it would never become what it is. The most portentous recasting of early Christian history is being done just in these terms; it drives straight at the centre of the historic Christian position. Any man not a scholar, in the most demanding sense of the word, in this region is in no position to offer a controlling judgment, but it is quite impossible to go through the literature of the subject without recognizing correspondence, not to be ignored, between the final emergence of Christianity as a deliverance religion and the quest for redemption which we see dimly through the mysteries.

What were the mystery religions?

But what were these mystery religions? The name itself describes them. They were religious cults with carefully guarded ceremonies of initiation. The initiates were vowed to secrecy, and now time has made them more secret still; our knowledge of them is a web of glimpses and guesses. Some of their intriguing proceedings were as public as a Klan procession following the blazing cross, but what was finally done in their carefully guarded meetings remains untold.

What information we have comes often from unfriendly sources; one does not commonly see any religion justly through the eyes of its critics alone. They were "lowly and simple enough in their origin, they arose from observation of the patent facts of recurring death and subsequent rebirth in nature, and from the attempt to see in these alternations of winter and spring, decay and generation, sunset and sunrise, a symbol of the life and hope of man and a replica of the divine life, which in primitive thought was conceived merely as the all-vitalizing energy resident in nature."[7]

Since they grew out of the very simple and elemental things they have much in common despite their baffling variety. They used old legends of the gods—curious, uncouth, sometimes absolutely repulsive—which could be made

[7] Angus, *The Mystery Religions and Christianity*, p. 43.

to carry some symbolic meaning. There is a hopeless tangle of myth behind them, but the myths reflect some aspect of the age-old struggle of light and dark, death and life.

What they sought to do

They preserved much in their ritual (and I am condensing Angus's and Kennedy's fine studies of them here in a way to make specific references unnecessary) so primitive that the first meaning of it was wholly lost, and made a pageant and a liturgy of redemption out of it all. They undertook to reconcile a man and his god, to purge the stained of their sin, to deliver the hard-beset from the evil fortune of the world and the fearful from their fear.

Fear has always been a tremendously compelling element in man's dealing with nature and his gods. He has always been afraid since he first built a fire to give him a little circle of light in the fearsome dark. He has been afraid of wild beasts and the menace and dominance of fate—and afraid of himself. A humanity so beleaguered naturally seeks and strengthens every element of security in life and gives endless pains to creating defense systems. The mystery religions offered security and defense.

They believed in spiritual rebirth and the divine indwelling. The followers of Mithras prayed "Abide with me in my soul: leave me not." They sought for their votaries a spiritual ecstasy, a "divine frenzy" in which they believed themselves to be in immediate communion with their god. Their entire ritual combined to secure this result; fastings, silence, pageants and processions, music and dances, alcohol and orgiastic excitement. The strange and sometimes gross ways in which the experience was secured ought not wholly to blind us to what the initiate was really seeking or his sincere persuasion that he had found it. Certain passages in St. Paul's letters seem to indicate that he was writing to converts who had once used these doubtful roads to spiritual insight and remembered them with a lingering regret.

Still other elements gave the mysteries their popular power. They were bright with an assurance of immortality; they were open to any seeker, high or low; accidents of birth and

station disappeared in the new fellowship of spiritual rebirth. They fitted in with that breaking up of an ancient order already noted. They supplied the lonely with comradeship and invested the insignificant with the importance of the order to which he belonged—in that they were not unlike secret societies to-day.

VI

As we come closer, by such roads as are open, to the essential ways of the mystery religions, we find them all akin and curiously enough akin to mysticism. Martin, who held, so long afterward, that all the mystic ways are one, might have felt this still more strongly if he had traced the mystic way through all the murky light of cults which he would have plainly considered heathen abominations. It is strange by how many roads we are brought back to the essential Pilgrim's Progress of the soul from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. One can say nothing more about all this, than to say that what goes so deep, has lasted so long, and has taken so many forms, is no accident at all, being an unescapable aspect of the growth of the spiritual life.

Their three stages of initiation

There were three stages in the mystery initiations. First, probation and preparation; second, initiation; third, blessedness and salvation. And what is all this save the self-negation, the purgation, and the unification of the mystic way under other names. The mysteries differed naturally in their ways of probation and preparation. Some of them demanded confession of sin and supplied rites of purification with baptism. The followers of Mithras submitted to a baptism of blood from a slain bull. The underground chambers in which they met, with their curious arrangement for the blood bath, still remain in Europe with many bas-reliefs representing the ceremony.[8] There were also proper sacrifices and tests of courage and endurance, taking many forms of self-mortification and self-denial. Though this was a hard price to pay for their assurances

[8]Cumont has followed this out with exhaustive detail.

of peace, the weary and the heavy laden would not hesitate to pay it.

They also paid in more material ways. The initiations were often expensive and, if a votary became a confirmed seeker going from cult to cult, he might expend his patrimony as did Apuleius. The actual ceremonies of initiation were highly dramatic and took forms which the Church Fathers thought extremely objectionable. There are differences of opinion among the specialists as to the extent of the earthly, the elementally immoral in these initiations. But doubtless there were such elements.

The ancient world saw only the externals of these initiations: torchlight processions, excited crowds bound for secret places, dancing and shouting, white garments, garlands and waving branches, strange lights on distant hills or in sequestered valleys. The centre of it all was some symbolic indentification of the initiate with the divinity whose protection and peace he sought. All these cults had their colleges of priests who knew the value of liturgic light and colour and conducted a daily and yearly round of worship. They wore striking vestments, celebrated matins and vespers, and made an always fascinating and sometimes splendid drama of daily devotion.

Their sacraments and festivals

There were sacred meals which the fellowship ate together with their god for the unseen guest, or else they believed that they actually fed upon divinity. The great festivals of the mystery cults came in December and March or April and were celebrated with fitting devotion and even splendour. They commemorated the turn of the seasons, the triumph of life and light over dark and cold and death. But even the priests of Attis had forgotten this: they remembered only the death and resurrection of the god. There is an enormous margin to all this which does not concern us here. Angus and Kennedy tell the story with a scholar's fullness of detail; Cumont tells it with insight and literary charm.

Scholars are generally agreed as to the elements which gave the mystery religions their appeal. Angus quotes the

conclusions of other specialists and adds his own. They possessed the authority of an immemorial antiquity; they taught religious truth in appealing symbolism; they satisfied the yearning for union with deity, purged the soul of sin, promised immortality. They dealt with the individual, supplied fellowship to the lonely, and made religion a fact of experience. They did on the whole purify the moral life of their time. On the other hand, they were entangled in a childish mythology; they fostered magic and sorcery; they lacked a proper balance of qualities; they were excessively emotional with little appeal to the intellect. They were old but they lacked staying power.[9] The time was ripe in the first Christian centuries for a religion stronger than they were when they were strong, and without their weaknesses, to displace them. Christianity did displace them, but what happened to Christianity in the process?

There is no question about the contact of Christianity and the mystery religions. The logic of the situation created the contact.

VII

Some contact of Christianity and these cults inevitable

The multi-coloured and intensely human regions which Christianity set out to win were their chosen stage of the mystery religions; no missionary could go far and miss them. Saul of Tarsus, feeling for the soul of his time, was certain to encounter them; he must have known about them from his Tarsan boyhood. And long after St. Paul, Christianity met them all along its lengthening front. A certain measure of give and take was inevitable. How far did it go?

If we had some record of the real experience of a member of the Church at Corinth or Ephesus, to tell us why he became a Christian, and what he found in his new faith, and why he left his old, it would be worth any scholar's half guessing. We see early Christianity through almost every

[9] Angus, *op. cit.*, Chaps V and VI.

medium save through the questing souls and confused minds of early unlettered Christians—which would be the best medium of all. What the convert brings to his new religious life is always as truly creative as what he finds.

Christianity original and authoritative

I cannot believe that Christianity merely substituted Jesus Christ for Attis and Mithras, and won the world as a masquerader. It was already deeply established upon Roman soil before the followers of Mithras bowed to their baptism of blood. You cannot slip Attis between the pages of the gospel of St. Mark, or St. Luke either, and find the key to Christianity. To say that within forty years religious syncretism could have created the gospel narrative out of the strange nebulous stuff of Hellenic myths and rites and given it satisfactory consistency is to say the impossible. By the time the gospels were written the Apostolic Church was already a going concern, with its own recollection of its own beginnings confirmed not only by Acts, which no more reflects mystery influences than the Book of Chronicles, but by all sorts of subtle correspondences in the undisputed letters of St. Paul. And these are as satisfactory documents as any from the ancient world. Finally there is Jesus of Nazareth Himself.

Christianity did not assemble its materials from the mystery cults, but St. Paul did shape its appeal to meet the need of the pagan world which the mystery religions were undertaking to satisfy. In this he showed a statesmanship and religious genius which made him in some ways the second founder of Christianity. He found the road which would carry it to "the uttermost part of the world."

VIII

The genius of St. Paul

Saul of Tarsus was born in northwestern Asia and lived in a mixed population. He was deeply sensitive and reflective. Religion was from first to last the supreme interest of his life; he had an unusual power of seeing behind forms to the spirit and meaning of things. He developed in his later life an unusual

catholicity of spirit, a wide sympathy with humanity in all its saddened states, and always with a very clear searching vision of its faults and its helplessnesses. It is impossible that he lived and laboured and died with no recognition of what was going on about him, or that his ministry caught neither reflection nor echo from the lights and voices of mystery procession.

One has no right to make an argument out of a supposition, and St. Paul has never told us what he took down to the school of Gamaliel in Jerusalem, save that he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews and brought up strictly in the ways of the law; but that would not prevent him from having been brought up also in the ways of Tarsus, or walking its streets with the wide-eyed wonder of a boy, or coming back to it years later as one comes back to something he has always known and understood. The Apostle who became all things to all men, if in that way he might save some, could not have gone through Asia Minor and Greece for thirty years without entering deeply into the ways and minds of the religious seekers of the time and the region.

What he discovered and what he offered

St. Paul was a man of alert intelligence; he certainly knew as much about Asia Minor through living in it as the specialist knows now through deciphering earth-stained inscriptions. He has told us how he was caught up into the third heaven, but he has never told us what his fellow craftsmen talked about as they made tents of black haircloth, nor what the curious and the seekers said to him after he had finished preaching to them; nor what he said to them. But if he did not discern, deep hidden in the spirit of the lands through which he moved and the folk to whom he preached, a longing for deliverance which was Christianity's supreme opportunity, then it is no use to try to reconstruct a vanished situation at all. He felt the longing behind the murky drama of the mysteries and fastened upon that. He knew that Jesus Christ held in His pierced Hands a gift of life for want of which classic civilization was dying at the root. He opposed the fact of the Cross to the myths of Attis and Osiris, and in that sign he conquered.

How far did he go to meet the pagan mind?

The point in debate, of course, is how far St. Paul took the creative substance of his gospel from the mystery religions, fitting their terminology into a Christian frame and subduing their purposes to a Christian end. Or else how far he simply adapted Christianity to the needs of the pagan world as he saw them, being always true to its essential genius. As has been said, the correspondences between the mystery religions and Christianity are arresting, and nothing is gained by ignoring them. The mystery religions were built about a faith in a saviour god whose suffering, death, and resurrection the initiate could share. There were blood cleansing for sin, ritualistic uses of water, sacramental meals, shadowy legendary gospels, myths for us but hardly myths for those who heard them recited.

Christianity was influenced by its contacts with the mystery religions

St. Paul has a way of using words which might seem to be taken from the mysteries themselves. Such facts as these with their marginal regions of suggestion have a force which is not lightly dismissed. I do not believe that Christianity remained uninfluenced by its inevitable contacts with the pagan religious mind. It has never passed through any period of history or shared any outstanding phase of the travail of the human spirit without being changed. It would not be a world religion if it had not taken into its always deepening current contributions from all the watersheds of the human soul.

But H. A. A. Kennedy, in his careful study of St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, weighing with a scholar's scrupulous touch the facts in hand, contends that they must not be pushed too far. If there are parallelisms in St. Paul's use of cult words, there are also vast divergencies. But the defense of Christianity, if it need defense, or else the proof of its creative originality, must be sought in something more convincing than a study of New Testament words, or an analysis of perplexing resemblances between the sacred meals of a mystery church and the Christian Communion. A religion put together by a sort of patchword process out of the odds and

ends of the religious cults of Greece and Asia Minor could never have become what Christianity did become. Christianity had from the beginning its own historic sources; its own quickening from the brooding spirit of God; its own ways and its own truth. It had, also, as its peculiar and priceless possession the mind and authority of Jesus Christ.

Christianity, from the first, found a sustaining basis for its deliverance gospel in what Dr. George Stevens calls the "prophetic doctrine of salvation."[10] A longing for deliverance kindled the prophet's passion and supplied a motif for the psalmist's song. St. Paul did not need to watch a procession going to a mystery initiation, or make a system of the gossip of Tarsus to know that deliverance costs pain and blood and tears. The Prophet of the Exile and Hosea had taught him that, and his own experiences as well. Love is the key to love's ways. The facts of the life and suffering death of Jesus Christ were there to be interpreted.

Adaptation to need did not make Paul's Gospel untrue

If the recognition of a longing he could not miss pressed the penetrating and creative mind of Paul toward this interpretation, that does not make his gospel untrue. It was supremely true to the facts he had in hand, and more than that, it was supremely true to the way—and the only way—of deliverance. The vast pressure of need upon life, out of which the Christian doctrine of Redemption issued, is not in words or inventions. It is in the nature of things and the price of life, and what we are and what love is, and what love must do to be triumphant. Sacrifice is older than theology, and the rootings of it are deep in the dark of elemental things.

If there are arresting correspondences between the mystery religions and Christianity, it is because these correspondences are rooted in something deeper and older than either. Christianity took the channels it did, not because the mysteries had worn them first, but because they were native to its genius and already worn deep in the ways and needs of life.

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[10] *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, Chap. II.

Both Christianity and the mysteries find their analogies of life and death and resurrection in nature by no accident. That is where life and death and resurrection begin.

IX

The influence of the processes of nature upon religious thought

We shall never know, I suppose, how far we are in debt to the old, old processes of nature for suggestions in the light of which we understand ourselves. We live, physically, after all, by the sun, and men knew that before they knew how to explain it. They feared shortening light and lengthening darkness. We shall never know with what chill of mortal fear the shadow of approaching winter first fell across them, or what dread they had that the darkness would finally triumph and light be lost. Or with what joy they welcomed the turn of the winter solstice and saw light slowly regnant again; or what spring meant to them; or the mystery of the beginnings of life and seeded and growing things. No wonder they first felt the nearness and mystery of God in such ways of earth and sky as these.

Something of this Frazer has followed out for us in the fascinating studies of the Golden Bough, but even so, something is irrecoverably lost. There is no recapturing the haunting wonder of the men who watched it and wove it into their religion and made a religion out of it, built it with dramatic instinct into rituals, and made it articulate in their myths. But behind it all are bare facts; the facts of death and life, and the perpetual loss and the perpetual renewal of life; and the growing sense that this was God's work and through it He might best be known.

How the sense of the cost of it all grew among them we shall never know either; though I suppose the travail of motherhood contributed thereto, and labour, and weariness, and some sense of spending themselves for something beyond themselves, and the dawn of what was love, though they knew not yet what to call it. So they discovered slowly the

forms in which life is cast and the laws of the growth of it, and the price of its triumph.

If their sacrifices were, to begin with, to buy the favour of a god by meeting some need of his, or else to propitiate his anger by giving up something dear, they presently became more than that. They became the symbols of the price of goodness, or else they became the gifts and self-denials of love. They foreshadowed the way of the redemption, and those who understood them most clearly saw also most clearly how inadequate they were and how something beyond a smoky and bloodstained altar was needed to make plain the ways of God with men.

The inevitable conflict

Now these mystery religions were, to begin with, built out of such elements as these. though carried into a higher and finer region. But one more element should be noted here before going on. The element of conflict is implied in everything we have thus considered: conflict between light and darkness; conflict between life and death, and finally, as men grew more sensitive to their own untutored and shadowed struggles, a conflict within themselves, between their highest and their lowest, their best and their worst, the insistence of their bodies and aspirations of their spirits, their sense of high destiny and the strange circumstances of life.

X

The need of deliverance is actually rooted in the reality of this struggle, for if there were no struggle there would be no need to be delivered. The most interesting and significant thing in the whole history of religion is the way in which these old, old processes, and murky faiths, and crude rituals have constantly purified themselves and taken always less crass and more spiritual form. The mysteries themselves used curious and sometimes seemingly impossible material. The myths out of which they grew were both bizarre and savage, and with no meaning at all unless we see in them crude symbols to body forth higher things.

The mysteries liberated and purified these archaic forms through which the light shows so dimly. A longing for personal purity began to emerge; the struggles involved were more distinctly spiritual struggles. The deliverance sought included peace, goodness, an escape from the restrictions of mortality. And what is perhaps most to the point of all, the proof of the deliverance was in the reborn life of the initiate and his own consciousness of it. Religion, even in its extraordinary crude and imperfect ways, has taken such forms as these and followed such roads by an unescapable necessity. Christianity could no more escape it than frenzied superstition. But it could, on the other hand, and did, reveal the high and final way of deliverance.

We must distinguish here between Christianity and the garmenture with which the Church adorned it. Catholic liturgy did adapt mystery ceremonies and some trappings to Christian uses. Loisy has established this beyond debate, and Dean Inge sustains him. But even these adapted things had a use which old experience had tested. Why should they not be continued? Symbolism did not begin with the mysteries. It has an invaluable meaning for religion. Baptism is an old, old rite, and so are sacred meals. The time-established supports to which religion has always clung are more than habit; they are aspects of necessity. The three stages of the spiritual pilgrimage have reappeared for almost three thousand years under changing names, because they are waymarks in the road the soul has to use if it escape itself and discern God. Such things as these were bound to reappear in the Catholic cult.

St. Paul offered Christianity as the divine answer to the deliverance quest

But the deliverance Greece and Rome sought was in Christianity to begin with, and it is the signal glory of St. Paul to have caught the gleam of it and made it a light for all the world. I do not see why we should doubt for a moment that he not only recast his inherited Hebrew expectations of the Messiah to fit into the facts of a crucified and risen Jesus Christ, but that he also thought this through in terms of the Gentile world of which he had been and was to be again a part, and saw how

everything which was there in quest and ferment found its answer, to his mind, in the Christian revelation.

By the middle period of his ministry he had formulated and begun to preach his deliverance gospel, and it centred about the Cross of Christ. All the elements of deliverance toward which the pagan world was groping were there in saving fullness. If they were seeking deliverance, here was the deliverance they sought; if they were desirous of peace, here was the peace which passeth understanding; did they seek the assurance of triumphant life, they would find it in Jesus Christ. Did they feel already that redemption means sacrifice, here was the supreme sacrifice. Must divine love suffer for sin, then Jesus Christ had suffered. The saying of what he had to say was so inevitable because it fitted so perfectly into these forms. He never surrendered entirely his inherited Messianic programme. He lived and maybe died in the expectation of the day of the Lord.

But more and more, if his epistles are any register of his mind, that fell into the background. He preached a deliverance religion with the doctrinal supports and the really vast ranges of speculation which his gospel of deliverance demanded; and yet he had behind him all the time the solid facts of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

St. Paul naturally emphasized this side of the Christian revelation as he knew it, and many elements of the teaching of Jesus fall into the background of his teaching, though they emerge substantially in his practical counsel to the churches. But the point is that, by the time it had entered its first phase of missionary appeal, Christianity set out to win the world as a deliverance, believing it had a divine commission to do it.

XI

This conception begins to control Christian thinking

When the gospels took final form they both reflected and supported this. The Fourth Gospel, significantly, being the latest, strikes this note most strongly, supplying many of the great proof texts. The period which preceded the creed-making time, during which

as it were the doctrines of the Church were in gestation, being shaped both by the experience of Christians themselves and that form of missionary appeal which the Church found most effectual, naturally emphasized this tendency. When the creeds were finally articulated, they were creeds of incarnation and redemption. Again, as in the ripened literature of the Messianic hope, the salvation of man became a drama splendidly carried through. But it was no longer a drama of the redemption of a nation, it was a redemption of the individual.

The setting was, in part, transferred from the rocky uplands of Palestine and the gray walls of Jerusalem to the mysterious and shadowed regions of the human spirit and the city of Man-Soul. It began in the predetermined councils of the Godhead. It included a fallen humanity, a race ruined beyond any self-deliverance, and long and prophetic anticipations of a deliverer. It was beautiful with a maiden's wonder, and a star above Bethlehem, and choiring angels; it was marvellous with the piteous scene on Gethsemane, and an empty sepulchre, and a Day of Judgment when humanity would be separated as a shepherd divides his sheep and his goats. It is the Christian scheme of redemption.

The Church begins to formulate the "Doctrine of Redemption"

Naturally the Church tried to make so tremendous a thing articulate in her doctrines. Their history and changing forms do not concern us here; they have been everything, from Satan tricked out of what he thought his due, to theories of the atonement which find the efficacy of it in rekindled moral aspiration, and the imitation of Christ.

I would not say these are details; they are tremendous facts in the history of Christian doctrine. They have been centres of really bitter controversy. They have engaged the attention of acute and disciplined minds. They have been made tests of orthodoxy and Heaven or hell has been made to depend upon the acceptance or rejection of them. But all the while there has been through or behind them or, better, within them something that they have never been able completely to express, because, I suppose, it is inexpressible save in terms

of life itself: the need of deliverance, the helplessness of man without God, the revelation of the price deliverance costs love and which God must pay because He is love. Life, they have taught the centuries, is paid for in terms of life; we are set free at a price. And until God comes to share and to bear we shall never be set free at all.

Why Christianity won the world

All else, they have taught us, is but the foreshadowing of this, and in this the hope of humanity was fulfilled. But these are incidental considerations. Christianity won the world into which it first adventured because it met so perfectly the need of which that world was spiritually acutely conscious, and which it was trying in ways, with which Christianity triumphantly fell in, to satisfy. Christianity won the world because this very gospel of deliverance gave it a detached universality and a direct human appeal. It was thus able to select throughout the entire Roman Empire those individuals who responded to its appeal. It was not tied up with any race or group. It made possible new human associations upon a new foundation, the foundation of one God, one faith, and one transforming experience.

XII

Angus's six reasons

In his illuminating study of the Mystery Religions and Christianity, Angus names six reasons for Christianity's victory over competitive religions. Curiously enough, he begins with its intolerance, the courage of its disbeliefs. It insisted upon its own possession of the only truth and the only true way of deliverance. It would share the throne of its spiritual sovereignty with nothing else. It was a religion of humanity, recognizing from the first no difference between Jew and Greek, male or female, bond or free. Its enabling principle was faith, simple, accessible, and displacing once and for all the elaborate form of the mystery religion as well as the burden of the Jewish law.

But Angus's fifth point is the point upon which everything else turns: "Christianity brought a satisfying message to the widespread sorrow of the ancient world." Its power was

in its way to purge tears of their salt bitterness and let in a light upon shadowed experience, and give a meaning to pain, and touch a temporal existence with a glory arising beyond the hills of time. Its supremacy was in its power to assure the troubled and to quiet indicting consciences by a proclamation of pardon in which the sanctities of righteousness were secured not by surrender, but by their vindication in the moral dealings of God with man. In a sentence, Christianity triumphed because it brought deliverance and possessed in Jesus Christ a historic basis for its faith and its force. Other elements, as we shall presently see, were associated with this. But this has so far been supreme and the secret of its power. And here would seem to be an empire always to be possessed.

The influence of all this upon the Christian mind has been incalculable. It has created an immense doctrinal literature and supplied the governing form into which the Christian appeal has been cast. The Christian key words have been and are salvation and redemption. It has made the Cross the distinctive sign of the Christian faith and lifted it against every skyline. It has naturally fused with the Christian doctrine of immortality. The issues of salvation—or the failure to be saved—have been carried beyond the grave. There have been distinct losses in making salvation identical with Heaven and the missing of it spell hell. The meanings of it for life have been entangled with rewards and punishments of situation. The more searching issues of life in spiritual wealth or poverty have thus been obscured. As the assurance of a localized Heaven or hell has grown dim, something of the passion for salvation with which the "lost" accepted the evangel has been lost also. It is only fair to say that modern preaching of the more vital sort recognizes this and is seeking to correct it.

But the Gospel of the Cross has meant more to the heart of Christianity than to its mind. The doctrines have often been hard, but an immense and grateful tenderness has been kept alive in the Church hymns and prayers. The evangelical passion of Christianity is centrally fed by its persuasion that

it has a message to save men, and there is no way to put into words at all the continuing testimony of numberless Christian disciples to the peace they have found in accepting the assurance of God's saving love made manifest through the mystic transaction of the Cross. If the doctrines of it have often missed the mark, the fruition of it in life have proved that Christianity found its timeless message with a sure apprehension—when it offered itself as the way to life.

As long as we are divided in our own natures and the burdens of mortality are heavy upon us, and seeing the better way we are unable to take it, and conscious of our own weakness we fall prone

> "Upon the great world's altar stairs,
> Which slope through darkness up to God"—

so long will Christianity's proffer of deliverance, however conceived, be its supreme appeal to a needy humanity. And the great world's altar stairs will always find enough to use them as long as they see the Cross at the top.

Chapter V

CHRISTIANITY WINS THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND TRANSFORMS THE PAGAN MIND

Early Christianity a struggle on two fronts

CHRISTIANITY began in the meeting place of the East and the West, and the first four hundred years of its history is largely the story of a struggle on two fronts. On its Western front it faced the whole massive order of classic paganism, which it finally defeated and supplanted by a vigorous offensive long maintained at immense cost. On its Eastern front it faced the dangerous allure of religious speculation—though religious speculation, loose as the phrase is, is too exact a name for the far flights of the mind, subtle interpretations of life, and capricious interpretations of God which threatened to lose Christianity in the clouds.

Both fronts were engaged substantially during the same period; Christianity found itself opposed to paganism directly it began to penetrate Greek and Roman society, and the doctrinal controversies were perhaps a century later in coming into action. On the other hand, the period of doctrinal controversy continued after the victory of Christianity over paganism was practically assured. Indeed that campaign has never ended. But in a very accurate historical way the two campaigns, still using the military figure, were so associated as to make it very difficult to consider them independently. There was always a mutual support and interlocking strategy on both fronts; veterans of the Diocletian persecution, blind of an eye and lame of a leg, supported orthodoxy at Nicea, the theologian supplied a motive for martyrs' constancy. If Christianity had been decisively defeated in its struggle with paganism, the final formulation of its creeds would have come to nothing more than the definition of a

lost cause. If Christianity had failed to formulate its own faith in some authoritative and generally accepted way, it would have gained nothing by defeating paganism since it would have had nothing, except a general unwordly morality, to put in the place of it.

To use a modern figure, the war against paganism was fought out on the land; the doctrinal controversies were fought in the air. In what follows we shall do best to follow each campaign separately, remembering, always, that two struggles were going on at the same time.

I

St. Paul defines the issue on the Western front

St. Paul puts the issue involved in the long and costly struggle of Christianity with the pagan culture of Greece and Rome, in one militant sentence addressed to the Church in Rome, which certainly held a front-line trench. "Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." "This world" was no shadowy abstraction for the Christians of the first three centuries, it was concrete, challenging, encompassing. It marched by them in disciplined legions going out to defend far frontiers; it crowded them off the road in the proud retinues of Roman officials changing stations.

It bought and sold in the marketplace, and the Book of Revelation grew fairly lyric over its merchandise—"merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all thyne wood and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of most precious wood and of brass, and iron and marble, and cinnamon and spice, and incense and ointment, and wine and oil, and fine flour, and wheat and cattle, and sheep, and the merchandise of horses, and chariots, and slaves, and the souls of men."

"This world" shouted itself hoarse over gladiatorial games; it sat in the sun and gossipped in the baths and made easy love. It ran by the doors of lonely and entangled little Chris-

tian churches in colourful tides of trade and pleasure. It worshipped indulgent divinities with time-honoured rites, in temples of pillared loveliness mellow with the years. The gods and goddesses "this world" worshipped were already dimly seen through doubt and myth, but the bronze and marble simulacra of them made beauty luring and sense supreme. They asked nothing of their worshippers but incense or a gift and blessed, in return, seed time and vintage, the turn of the seasons, and old, old human ways of war and love, labour, and pleasure. "This world" housed itself in huts and palaces and ruled an entire civilization from an imperial city already so old that men could not think of a time when Rome had never been or imagine a time when Rome would never be.

II

The tenacious unity of paganism

This whole tremendous order was an interwoven unity, its laws, religions, manners, morals, understandings, and philosophies of life were radiating aspects of one central spirit. It was rooted in an immemorial past, it had grown through victorious disciplines, and even by the time Christianity began to challenge it had made an impress upon the human mind never since effaced. Paganism was not, therefore, any one single thing, and yet there was at the heart of it a fascinating consistency. The tenacity of it was not alone in the civilization it had created and the culture it had matured, but in its adaptation of the entire enterprise of life to the ways of nature, the supremacy of the senses, and the lordship of time.

The essence of paganism

Paganism was then and is now—for it has a marvellous power to reassert itself over changing times and civilization—a series of stratified interests and attitudes. The more significant part of paganism is never in what lifts itself into light, easily to be seen and understood, but in the hidden foundations of it deep in the relation of the human spirit to the world order. The religion of classic paganism centred about the worship of the Greek gods and goddesses, who were themselves the children

of earth and time; the personifications and idealizations of natural forces and human instincts and emotions.

The poetry and imagination of a race giftedly capable of credulity and wonder had invested them with a wealth of legend, made "words" about them which we call myths but which were, to begin with, the sheer creation of genius not yet grown wise—and old. Zeus ruled the air with his thunderbolts and Poseidon ruled the sea with his trident, Ares was the god of the sword, and Aphrodite made love divine, and so with all the rest of them, whose names are a part of our classic mythology. They changed their names but never their natures. They moved westward with the seat of empire, they were as much at home in the Pantheon at Rome as upon high Olympus, since their real home was always in the habit and instinct and desire of humanity. They have since moved westward and changed their names again but not their natures. Now they are clay-ruled love and pride and power and wealth and war, and their real home is still in the habit and instinct and desire of humanity.

The organization and splendour of pagan worship

They slowly built about them, and carried with them wherever they went, a really enormous religious structure of temples, priests, and liturgical ceremonial. Their temples were built then, as churches are built now, by the devout and the grateful. The wealthy built them to display their wealth; emperors built them as a memorial of this or that victory, and they sheltered forms of worship quite as various as the churches of our Christian communions. There were four hundred and twenty-five pagan temples in Rome at one period; there are about four hundred Christian churches or chapels in Rome to-day.

By all the tests of property, organization, prestige, and power paganism was as dominant in the Rome of the Third and Fourth centuries as Christianity in the Rome of the Twentieth. The cities of the empire generally were equally temple filled. Marcus Aurelius wrote to a friend, "We have just visited Anagnia; it is a small enough city full of antiquities, and above all full of an unbelievable number of religious

edifices and superstitions of every sort. There is not a street where one does not find a temple, a sanctuary, or a chapel."[1]

Paganism strongly supported by wealth and tradition

These temples had their endowments and their treasuries. The official religions of paganism were also supported by public revenues. There is no state church to-day more intimately or officially associated with government and civil society than the state religion of Rome with the entire life and administration of the empire. Pagan religion had already taken to itself the great sanctions which support old and hallowed institutions; Roman pride, Roman conservatism and the august Roman sense of power combined to invest it with the sanctity time alone can give. There was, besides, all that interlocking support of vested interest which makes a strongly established institution, in the conduct of which the privileged find advantage and profit, so impregnable. Christianity then faced the whole superb and massive structure of the pagan religion.

III

Paganism was kind to human nature

But paganism was far more than a religion, it was an attitude of life. Kirsopp Lake calls it "a world-accepting religion." There was no quarrel between these gods and goddesses and the affairs and interests of "this world." None of them had ever been crucified through scorn of it or sent into exile through the proud defiance of it. They were just the lure and the glory and the power and the love of the world deified. Naturally they approved what created them, and blessed their devotees with the gifts of sense and profit and pleasure; the main currents of religion and human nature ran in the same direction.

Moral aspects of paganism

There was in paganism at its best, and especially in Rome, a really noble and demanding and even austere morality. We read back too much into that vanished civilization if we read

[1]Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme*, Tome II, p. 232.

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back into it such an excess of moral decadence as it has generally been blamed with. A society rotten to the heart of it could not have conquered so much, endured so long, or built so solidly. But there was no such intimate relation of religion and morality as Christianity demanded. The gods were morally indulgent, and worship generally was a form rather than a spiritual passion.

The actual outcome of all this, especially in the First and Second Christian centuries, was a general indulgence of the senses. The best the stoic could do was to rise above the sense and hold himself scornfully aside from those who found their pleasure there, congratulating himself, as did Marcus Aurelius, that he had kept himself unstained from the common faults of his time, not so much because they were wrong as because they were unworthy of a philosopher.

Another philosophy sought, at the best, only the control of a moderate restraint—its motto was "not too much." The generality of a mixed population acknowledged no such shadowy restraint. Christianity did its first hand to hand fighting with paganism in just this region. But the more significant contrast was in the profoundly opposed approach of Christianity and paganism to the whole world order. Paganism was, to repeat, a world-accepting religion and Christianity a world-denying religion; thus the issue was joined.

Christianity a world-denying religion

Christianity denied the world for many reasons. It denied the world because apostolic Christianity was certainly persuaded, and primitive Christianity was vaguely persuaded, that the world was soon to end anyway and all the pride and pomp of it disappear before the quick transforming return of Jesus Christ. But Christianity denied the world also because it found its first converts among those to whom "this world" was anything but kind. Roman imperialism, like every other imperialism, rested upon dark and bloodstained foundations. Conquered provinces were long in adjusting themselves contentedly to Roman administration. According to some estimates, almost half the population of the empire were slaves. The very vastness of the imperial order created individual

and spiritual loneliness. Upon any calculation, a great body of the subjects of the empire were long shut out from any hope of political preferment or economic independence.

The empire was seamed with appalling contrasts of wealth and poverty and, during the period of the first drive of Christianity upon the pagan order, the number of the poor and the socially disinherited was rapidly increasing. Such as these to whom "this world" offered so little that was either bright or free, and so much that was shadowed and heartless, naturally found their peace in the heavenly citizenship which Christianity offered, their comradeship in its poor and despised fellowships.

The spiritual sterility of pagan faith

Then again there was an increasing number of those who, having had everything the senses could offer, found therein no spiritual satisfaction at all. Paganism does well enough till you reach the heart of it, or else until it reaches your heart, and then

> ". . . earth is darkness at the core
> And dust and ashes all that is."

The irreconcilable antagonisms between Christianity and paganism touch at just this point, and just at this point a pagan humanity began to turn toward Christianity. I have, of course, left unconsidered the one distinction between Christianity and paganism which perhaps includes everything else; for paganism "this world" was bright and final, there were dim expectations of life beyond the grave, but they had no colour, no allure, no substance.

IV

The fundamental contrasts of Christianity and paganism

Early Christianity reversed all this. This present life was dim and shadowy, but life beyond the grave was bright with promise and rich in compensation for the tears and toil of time. Christianity put all its emphasis upon the spiritual values of life, paganism upon the senses

and the temporal order. Christianity saw life under the form of eternity, paganism under the forms of the transient. There could be no accommodation between the two systems; the issue was joined from the first. We do not now know, and I suppose there is no way of knowing, just how Christianity did win the empire.[2] There are abundant historical records and fairly satisfactory statistics of progress, but something is gone. Something we could fully understand only through the testimony of those who became Christian, and some far more definite statements than we possess of the arguments and appeals with which Christianity carried on.

The secret of the victory of Christianity

The New Testament shows us the beginning of it, and the records of a victorious Church and the Roman annals of the Fourth and Fifth centuries show us the end of it, but there are substantial regions between which can actually be filled in only with conjecture. Angus (*op. cit.*) has a very careful analysis of the elements which contributed to its success. He quotes at length the various causes assigned by various historians for the victory of Christianity. Perhaps Dr. McGiffert puts the whole matter in a single sentence when he says, "Ancient Christianity won its victory chiefly because it had far more elements of power and permanence, combined a greater variety of attractive features, and satisfied a greater variety of needs than any other system . . . its victory in the Roman Empire was fairly earned by sheer superiority."[3]

Christianity offered the pagan world what it most needed

Christianity offered the pagan world what it consciously or unconsciously was hungering for. It had a patience to suffer for its ideals and a power to illustrate its own gifts and graces through the lives of the faithful which made its appeal effective. The curious thing is the general unconsciousness, as far as the records go, of official society as to what was really going on. Rome apparently knew

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[2]We have the "Apologists," but I doubt if the common folk of the Empire were converted by "apologies."

[3]Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 273 *et seq.*

next to nothing about Christianity until after the Neronian persecution, and even then did no more than turn a vague and pitying glance upon it, moved rather by a general hatred of Nero than by any compassionate understanding of his victims. An occasional Roman official, like the younger Pliny, brought into official contact with them does not apparently even take the trouble to find out exactly who or why they were. "I have found," said Pliny, "nothing to reproach them with but a blameworthy and exaggerated superstition." But he proceeds to punish them for all that, not because they were blameworthy, but because they held to their faith in defiance of the Roman law.[4]

V

When the time came for the State really to take account of them it dealt with them only in terms of persecution. That was natural enough; the empire sustained one religious system through its treasury and its laws. It did not mean to sustain two, and it used the law which supported the established religion to end the insurgent religion beginning to show through the shadows. Now Rome was generally tolerant of the very great varieties of religions in the empire. Why did she deal so bitterly with the most blameless of her subjects? Any number of reasons are offered, though historians do not agree among themselves.

Christianity was a semi-secret organization, and the imperial policy was suspicious of secret organizations; but then there were the mysteries and, long before persecutions ceased, guilds and brotherhoods were licensed. The Christians were lukewarm loyalists—which was probably true. They were certainly under the suspicion of their neighbours who spread strangely misleading reports of what they did about their communion table. The anger of the gods was manifest in plague, famine, flood. Someone was to blame—why not the Christians?

[4]Boissier, *op. cit.*, Tome II, p. 211.

Was Christianity persecuted because it was international?

Other religions represented nationalities and needed to be considerately dealt with. Christianity was international, or better, unnational. Christianity also probably paid for some of the prejudice against the Jew. But essentially the Christian was a nonconformist, and Roman sagacity sensed, beneath his terrible meekness, a menace to the solidities and disciplines of the state. Christianity and nationalism have always secured a working agreement at considerable cost to one or the other. The imperialism of Christianity and the imperialism of the empire ran in opposite directions. Early Christianity was an ineluctable element not to be fused in the fires of loyalty. So the State tried other fires.

But persecution had no force to deal with the growth so vital, so deeply rooted and maintained by confidences no persecution could reach. It is doubtful whether the most determined and concerted State opposition could have defeated Christianity. A passion for martyrdom grew among the Christians by what it fed upon. Ignatius's one fear was that he should be pardoned. He begged influential friends not to intercede for him. "The pleasures of this world," he said, "the kingdoms of this dispensation shall avail me nothing. Better to die and be with Christ than to rule over all the ends of the earth. I seek Him who died for us . . . I am near to be born again; hinder me not to die; do not wish me to live. . . . The wild beasts are the road to God." He prayed, when tied to the stake, "I praise Thee that Thou didst deem me worthy of this day and hour."[5]

Fire and the arena can do nothing with a spirit like that. On the contrary, the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. As a matter of fact, the persecutions were regional rather than uniform; they were not equally pressed home, there was always a breathing space between them and, when armistice time came, the Church gathered together its broken elements and went on stronger than ever, though it had first and last a good deal of difficulty in knowing just

[5]Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. II, p. 311.

what to do with the weaker brethren who had fallen away under stress, and who sought to be readmitted to communion when the storm was past.

But the story of the persecutions is deeply moving for all that. Diocletian, for example, commanded that all churches should be demolished, all sacred books destroyed by fire, that Christians should be stripped of all public offices, dignities, or privileges, denied any rights in the Roman courts. Clergy and laymen, men, women, and children were burned or drowned wholesale, or else those who would not sacrifice to the pagan gods were sent to hard labour in the mines, being first blinded in the right eye and permanently lamed in the left leg. In such ways as these Christianity kept the faith.[6]

VI

The more difficult and strategic struggle

But this long-continued struggle was also carried through in less dramatic regions, but perhaps in more dramatic ways. Christianity had to free itself from all the subtle entanglements of the pagan life. There is here and there in the New Testament a passage in the letters of St. Paul to show us how all this began and what it involved. The daily conduct of any Christian's life was carried on in a world where almost every deed had a religious significance. He could not go to market without bringing back some taint of idolatry in his market basket, nor hardly draw water from a spring without recognizing the ancient divinty of the water, nor hang a garland upon his doorpost to welcome an emperor home from his wars without recognizing the divinity of the emperor.

Christianity and pagan education

The perplexities which grew out of this situation were endless. They involved social disfavour, the suspicion of the State, the sullen enmity of all the world of which Christianity was a part. The profound differences between Christianity and paganism involved culture and education. There were no books to read

[6]Duchesne, *The Early History of Christianity*, Vol. II, pp. 10–21; Spence, *Early Christianity and Paganism*, Chap. IX.

save pagan books; nothing to teach their children letters with save old tales of the gods and goddesses. Somewhat later, as Boissier tells us, Christianity sought to escape this dilemma by creating its own literature, but it was poor enough, as literature made to order always is, and the general culture of Christianity suffered for centuries for just this cause.

There were, besides, the solicitations of sense whose satisfactions had been made so easy and so blameless. The general force of public opinion was, to begin with, entirely against the Church, along with all those sanctions and customs whose power to sustain and whose strength to oppose, we never know till we take some lonely road against them. Slowly and at enormous cost Christianity disentangled itself from the ethics and cults of paganism and supplanted them with its own morality and its own faith. The road the Church travelled to win its freedom, as we have seen, was lighted by the martyr piles of the devout or stained red with their blood, but they did prevail in the end. The ancient spirits of the hearthstone, the field, and the fountain, along with the high gods of Olympus and the Pantheon, fled before the Cross—but the ancient spirits stayed longest and often came back later under the friendly shelter of Christian festivals and folk ways.

The counter offensive of paganism

Paganism, of course, did not surrender without a struggle. It was never an ignoble adversary, and toward the end a certain pathos and even moral dignity invest those who made their last stand for their faith and culture against the fateful drive of Christianity. The New Testament picture of the manners and morals of the civilization whose trade routes St. Paul followed and whose seas he crossed is darkly coloured, but for all that paganism was never totally depraved. It gained in moral strength and elevation of mind toward the end of the dominant period. Historians generally agree that there was, in the Second and Third centuries, a distinct amendment of pagan morals.

How far this was due to some general influence of Christianity, touching and changing for the better the morality of

the empire, how far pagan society amended its ways in self-defense, or how far the general level of Roman life was raised through long discipline and those natural reactions by which from time to time any society corrects its faults, one cannot definitely say, but the fact is beyond debate. Very likely there were always finer elements in Grecian and Roman society than we are inclined to recognize. Our judgments have been much influenced by Roman satirists who would naturally overstate the situation which they satirized and by Christian moralists who would allow nothing decent to paganism.

There has been of late a tendency to correct all this. Dill, for example, in his *Studies of Roman Society*, draws a very less deeply shadowed picture than we have been used to seeing.

The last heights upon which the dying light of paganism fell

We have also nobly moving records of the best which the philosophers and moralists of the empire sought to do and to be. One would go far to match the noble austerity of Seneca, or Marcus Aurelius's searching dealing with his own conscience. No worthy endeavour of the human spirit to maintain itself on high levels outside Christianity has been comparable with Roman stoicism in its best estate. By all the tests of the high fruition of character, there must have been many among the Christians of that time not to be measured against those who lifted their souls toward the highest and best they knew, as though the setting sun of an imperial order might be last seen reflected from their heights.

If Christianity could only have won such as these during its first two hundred years, the history both of the empire and the Church might have been arrestingly different. Paganism put up what defense it could against Christianity, but it had little interior force with which to meet the new religion. "Paganism," says Boissier, "was not organized for combat. In its status of an official religion it had accustomed itself to depend upon the state for protection. Everything failed it on the day it was abandoned by the sovereign; its priests were of little use to it in that unhappy contingency. In the Roman religion the priest was half priest and half civil magistrate,

and the priesthood generally lacked that *esprit de corps* and that religious passion which are puissant reinforcements for a religion under fire."[7]

Occasionally paganism made a militant defense. In Egypt, to quote Boissier again, "blood flowed around the temple of Serapis: in certain cities of Africa Christians were massacred before the statues of Hercules but their attacks were quickly put down."

There must have been a deal of anti-Christian literature, but practically none of it is left. The victorious Church confirmed its own triumph and did a very great disservice to history in having it destroyed. In general the silences of contemporaneous Latin literature are more significant than anything which is said. There seems to have been a conspiracy of silence among the great Roman families which kept their ancestral faith to the end. A strange fatality of blindness seems often to attend a dying civilization.

Those whose days are already numbered bear themselves as though nothing were changed, or ever would be, and go out into the dark with open and unseeing eyes. Boissier puts all this in one eloquent sentence, "While the Church, in high exaltation, sang its songs of triumph, the last pagans pass out of history without seeming to hear that music, or deigning to be troubled by it, their hearts assured, their heads high and showing by that haughty attitude how sure they thought themselves of the future."[8]

VII

The Christian emperors withdraw the support of the State

The Christian emperors began to bring the force of the State to bear against paganism, and the end, though sometimes postponed, was inevitable. In the year 383 the Emperor Constance withdrew all State support from the pagan cults. The money formerly used for religious festivals was divided between the imperial treasury and the treasuries of the cities and the provinces. The grants long

[7]Boissier, *op. cit.*, Tome II, p. 233.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 212.

made to the vestal virgins and priests were used for the support of the imperial post. The landed endowments of the temples and the associations of priests became a property of the State. By a single edict paganism was stripped of its pageantry and its glory. Though its temples were still open they were empty and bare.[9] The whole long conflict finally culminated in one of the dramatic instances of all history.

There had been since the days of Cæsar Augustus a statue of Victory in the hall of the Roman Senate, a Greek statue which the Romans had found at Tarentum and brought to Rome. Four centuries of history had woven an august mantle about that statue. The goddess had presided over the deliberations of the Senate for twelve generations; those who took the oath of allegiance to a new emperor lifted their hands toward Victory. Every senator in assuming office burned a grain of incense before her altar. The changing tides of religious fortune had ebbed and flowed about it. The altar had been forbidden and restored and forbidden anew, and now Constance proposed to disestablish it forever. Certain Roman senators rallied to its defense and pleaded the cause of paganism before the Emperor with the altar for a symbol.

The last words of dying paganism

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, accepted the challenge, and the debate became historic. Symmachus ceased to be the voice of a conservative Senator. He became the voice of Rome's august and valiant past in pleading for an order destiny was waiting to dismiss. "Let us at least," he said, "render to the name of victory, the homage we refuse to her divinity. Let those deny her power who have never known her help: do not renounce a protection which still promises you triumph. . . . Where shall we hereafter take the oath to be faithful, O prince, to your laws? What shall hereafter sustain the doubtful spirit. . . . This altar is the guarantee of the concord of all and the loyalty of each. . . . Since every issue of life is clouded with uncertainty, what guideposts have we to the divine presence, save the success and glory of the past? It is the long succession

[9]Boissier, *op. cit.*, Tome II, p. 259.

of the years which establishes the authority of religion. Let us follow the road our fathers have so gloriously followed.

"It seems to me that Rome is suppliant before you saying, 'Most excellent princes and fathers of your country, respect my hallowed past. Leave me my ancient solemnities. I am still free, permit me to live after my own customs. This worship of victory has made me mistress of the world, these sacrifices and sacred ceremonies have held my walls against Hannibal and my Capitol against the Gauls.' And then, as though a sigh from the tired lips of the mistress of the world, 'I am too old to change.' "[10]

It is impossible to catch the echoes of these words unmoved. Indeed they shook the Christians who attended the debate. There are in them the haunting pathos of all lost causes and the deep sorrow of the "tears of things."

Ambrose's reply is too long to summarize; he opposed Christianity in eloquent—and sometimes adroit—ways to paganism and maintained that Christians were the true defenders of liberty. But the issue was already decided before they began to plead; the cause of the altar was hopelessly lost, and victory sought another standard—a Roman Cross. By the end of the Fourth Century the edicts against paganism became inexorable.

It was forbidden to offer sacrifices, to enter the temples, to adore the statues.[11] By the year 410, when Alaric violated defenses which had been so long inviolable, sacked the city and pillaged its treasure, he carried away with him more than the hoarded wealth of a thousand years, he carried away with him the sanctity and incalculable prestige of the mistress of the world. Not even the ghost of paganism came back to haunt the desolation. Then Augustine wrote *The City of God*.

VIII

Pagan survivals

But paganism lived on for all that. It lived on in obscure places, in the age-old habits of populations; it came back into the Church itself with a

[10]Boissier, *op. cit.*, Tome II, pp. 275, 276; also Dill, *Roman Society*, pp. 30, 31.

[11]Boissier, *op. cit.*, Tome II, p. 269.

changed spirit and changed names. The lesser divinities became demons or else occasionally a saint. The old festivals took new names, the current of the ages flowed on through new channels, to be transformed into an actual Christianity, only through some slow change in the quality of human nature itself and the creation of a new culture.

The effect of all this upon the Christian mind

The long conflict with paganism and the Church's final triumph over it had left an indelible impress upon the Christian mind. It created one marvellous New Testament book—Revelation; it bequeathed to the Church a shining honour roll of saints and heroes and martyrs and a material of which hymn writers have made a signal use. They sing the memory of it not only in "For all the saints who from their labours rest" but also in "The Son of God goes forth to war." It enriched Christian recollection with a wealth of proud legend.

It gave Christianity a militant spirit, strangely alien to the gentleness of the gospels, the long-suffering patience of the beatitudes. It hardened generally the whole Christian temper and, along with the struggle against heretics, to which we shall almost immediately turn, it begot, in the very heart of Christianity, a quality of intolerance which expressed itself all too easily in un-Christian persecution and dated the beginning of the most shadowed chapter in the long history of the progress of the Christian faith. It gave Christianity a sense of possessing the empire which it had won at such great cost, which went far to furnish the foundations for imperial Catholicism.

Victorious Christianity was taught to use the weapons of the State

It certainly quickened in Christianity a consciousness of force equal to any circumstance; what could win the empire was irresistible. But there was an exchange of weapons toward the end of the strife. Christianity used a little force and a great deal of legislation. As soon as it won the governing power of the State it began to use the State to further its own ends. Paganism perished, having nothing to oppose to the Church

save its futile loyalties and cherished memories. Christianity ended paganism by a *coup d'état*. It is hard to see how it could have been different, but something alien to the mind of Christ entered Christianity in the final phase of its struggle with paganism—and still persists.

It was denied the chance to train itself in civic and social duties

I venture to suggest another significant result. Christianity was, in its first great formative period, compelled, too largely, to become the opponent of organized social life and government. Its interests, even its existence, lay apart from the going concern of humanity. It could not bring its essentially great force for social reformation to bear upon a situation it might have gone far toward saving. Or, if that were impossible, as Dill and Boissier believe, it might have had a training in endeavouring to save society which would have released Christian forces only now beginning to come into action—and moving stiffly from long disuse. If the first three Christian centuries could have made possible a more sympathetically intimate and creative alliance of religion and civilization, it would be impossible to calculate the result. But that was impossible; by the time Christianity was in a position to take classic civilization in hand, classic civilization was on its deathbed.

The loss of humane values in the struggle

And what is perhaps as determinative as anything else, it coloured the whole attitude of the Christian mind toward art, beauty, literature, and all the happy and blameless side of this earth-rooted human life of ours for a thousand years. Christianity triumphed over paganism only by a tremendous reaction from every aspect of it, a reaction which carried it too far from the rich content of human life. Though much which had no right to survive was thus finished and sent into final exile, much also was lost out of Christianity which left it dehumanized and even spiritually poor. This finer side of paganism, which was really not essentially pagan at all but just the joy and beauty of life, waited with an inexhaustible patience for a thousand years in the shadows, and then came back through humanism and the Renaissance.

But it had been kept in exile too long; it divided rather than enriched the Church upon its return; something was lost in that four hundred years' struggle, which Christianity has never since been able wholly to regain or completely subdue to spiritual uses.

Chapter VI

CHRISTIANITY WRITES ITS CREEDS—THE MAKING OF THE DOCTRINAL MIND

The Christian mind becomes doctrinal

THE doctrinal positions of the Christian mind were substantially consolidated in four hundred years of embattled discussion, and nothing since has essentially modified those positions. The Reformation went deep, but it did not reach the historic foundations of Christian faith. The full story of those centuries is the most complicated chapter in the history of Christianity; the contours of it lie like a mountain range against the horizons of Christian thought. Like a mountain range it is best seen from a distance; like a mountain range it has flanks and spurs, faults, precipices, deep-shadowed valleys and cloud-possessed heights.

If you penetrate into the folds of the hills themselves you are soon lost, but, seen afar, the long ranges of discussion followed one general direction, and that was to establish centrally and beyond any misunderstanding or debate the relation of Jesus Christ to God the Father. The Church here followed something deeper than instinct, it took the one line which gave Christianity its distinctive power as a religion.

I

A historic creed a great achievement of the human mind

A historic creed is one of the great achievements of the creative mind and involves an enormous range of contributary elements. There are no documents to compare with it save the constitution of a great State, particularly if that constitution have behind it long disciplines in government, old habits of authority and the general political

experience of a capable race through a long period of time. The United States Constitution would be an outstanding example of that. Great legal codes like the code of Justinian or the code of Napoleon are in many ways parallel, and yet they want certain elements which give a great creed its fascinating interest.

The creed-making forces

Great creeds always issue out of great controversies always long and generally bitterly maintained. The contrast between the bitterness of theological controversy and the gentleness which lies at the heart of a true Christian faith is arresting. Very likely the explanation is to be found in the intensity with which men devote themselves to interests involving not only the temporalities, but the eternities. If a man thinks himself to be a lonely champion of God's truth, he will naturally be more intense than if he be concerned only with the machinery of the State or the codification of civil law. If a great creed is to be finally formulated, there must be a sufficient necessity for its formulation. Some vital cause must be in peril, some commanding truth in danger. There must be also far-ranging differences of opinion and a great mobilization of contestants whose names and opinions carry weight, and some sense of the vast significant issues involved. All this invests a creed-making period with dramatic interest.[1]

Creeds must also be understood in the light of those positions against which they are directed. Every positive in a creed implies some negative of heresy, the defeat of which is finally perhaps registered in a single sentence, but one will not understand the sentence unless he understands the positions upon which it is trained. Like a treaty of peace, the significance of a creed must be sought not so much in the letter of the document as in all the struggle which lies behind it and the remote and actual forces which created the conflict. Just

[1]Harnack names ten factors in the making of a creed: (1) the Scriptures; (2) traditions; (3) needs of worship and organization; (4) the adjustment of conceptions of religion to doctrinal opinions; (5) political and social circumstances; (6) changing moral ideals; (7) desire for logical consistency; (8) reconciliation of factions; (9) to get rid of error; (10) sanctifying power of blind custom. These should be enough. *History of Dogma,* Vol. I, p. 12.

as one needs the history of Europe for a thousand years to understand the winding boundary lines of new states traced by the Treaty of Paris, so one needs to understand the entire situation of Christianity in its first five centuries, and much which lies outside and behind Christianity, to account for the awesome boundaries which draw their lines through the phrases of the historic creeds.

Lake names the three forces Christianity first faced

Kirsopp Lake says that "Christianity in the first three centuries faced three opposing forces—classical paganism, Gnosticism, and uninstructed Christianity." Paganism, as we have seen, was conquered by the zeal of the missionary, the steadfastness of the martyr, the integrity of the Christian life, and the growing discipline of the Church. Uninstructed Christianity was corrected by education, Christian inheritance, and the slow course of time.

II

Early Christian history a story of two wars

The drive against Gnosticism began the long offensive on the Eastern front, which lasted until Christianity had won intellectual independence and asserted its doctrinal unity. If one wanted a rough but not inexact historical parallel, the struggle against Gnosticism was Christianity's War of Independence. The great doctrinal controversies were Christianity's Civil War, ending in an orthodox Catholic Church whose tenacious unities endured for a millennium.[2] And war is not, everything considered, too harsh a word to characterize the long struggle; the sword of the spirit and the sword of the soldier were both in play, and neither went back to the scabbard unstained. The campaign on the Eastern front was no unqualified Christian offensive. For a considerable and trying period Christianity was hard put to it to save itself from being taken over and entirely changed by systems of half-religious and half-philosophic speculation, which converged upon it from many sources.

[2]This refers only to the Western Church.

St. Paul describes the alignment

Here again the Apostle Paul has described the alignment in a single illuminating sentence. "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." This is a vast deal more than spacious rhetoric; it is the description of a very definite situation. The Apostle's designation of these shadowy but none the less formidable foes is taken phrase by phrase from the enemy's roster.

Christianity began in a talking, dreaming age

The early Christian centuries had a consuming passion for speculation. The creative forces which had made the great philosophies and literatures were spent. The age of theologians was beginning, and it began in frontierless conjecture about God and His way of reaching a world of matter and human folk made of its clay. Heresies engendered in this cloud-filled region began to trouble the Church before the end of the New Testament period, and what was troubling the Church even more was the love of controversy.[3]

A line drawn north and south from Alexandria to Constantinople is, and has been, the cleavage line of civilizations, temperaments, art, literature, outlooks on life and religion. West of that line humanity has acted, possessed, and believed; east of that line humanity has dreamed and speculated and taken its wage in watching the spectacle of earth and sky and its own soul. East and West humanity has not been entirely consistent, otherwise it would not be humanity. The West has had fitful spells of dreaming and then taken to action again; the East has had fierce and fitful spells of acting, then taken to dreaming again—and watching the spectacle of earth and sky and its own soul.

What was needed to win the East

Christianity won the Latin-speaking and Latin-thinking lands by the disciplined consistency of its practical life; but it had to win the Greek-speaking and Greek-thinking lands by argu-

[3]See First Timothy 6:4; Second Timothy 2:14 and the Epistle of Jude.

ment—and the Greek had the last word. He made creeds of Christianity, and the West took over the creeds without the mind which drew them, or the subtle language in which they were drawn, and has made hard going of it ever since.

But the matter we are considering is by no means so simple as the last two rather inconsistent paragraphs seem to make out. They, at least, need to be corrected by the self-evident qualification that the Greek is not to be wholly identified with the dreamy speculation of the East. If it had been the fate or the fortune of Christianity to deal only with the Greek mind, and with the Greek mind on its highest and most creative level, the entire account of Christian thinking might be written in different terms.

Christianity did meet the Greek mind when the far-visioned splendour and force of that mind were in eclipse, and it met also the mixed and murky mind of the Near East in a period given to always daring, and sometimes lawless, mental adventure. Its first task was to escape the lawless adventure of the self-commissioned system makers; its next task was to supply an authoritative system of its own. What follows is the story, if one can make it clear, of how it accomplished these two tasks and what happened to the Christian mind in the doing of it.

III

The Church Fathers had their first troubled dealings with a system of religious philosophy as elusive as it was alluring. It was actually neither religion nor philosophy, being an attempt to combine them both in a cloud-built structure; but the phrase will do. I have been trying to avoid the word Gnosticism, for it is a word to make any reader close a book, but it must be used. We ourselves are not really unfamiliar with what it stands for, as the church advertising pages of any metropolitan newspaper will show. The numerous cults with curious names there advertised agree only in possessing some peculiar "knowledge" of God and man or the ways of life, sufficient to ensure health, or peace of mind, or prosperity, or satisfy some desire for an explanation of the mys-

tery of existence. All these are Twentieth Century Gnostics. First Century Gnostics were very much the same, without the newspapers.

Popular theology eighteen hundred years ago

They were popular theologians without a creed or a church. Though it is easy to call their systems cloud-built fantasies, they were also star dust out of which, in part, the ordered, Christ-centred system of Christian theology finally developed. "These 'highly speculative systems' . . . sought to explain the origin of evil, the nature of Divine Being, and the intersection of the spiritual and the material." They claimed to be "the knowledge of who we were, what we have become . . . into what place we have been thrown, whither we are hastening."[4] In a word, they were such answers as the time afforded to the three insistent questions which lie against the ultimate horizons of human thought, or press their points against a man's bewildered spirit—Whence? Whither? Why?

What Plato contributed

The speculative mind of the first two centuries contained elements from strangely different sources. Something of it, and the finer part of it, drew down from those serene heights from which Plato has so long ruled the world of dreamers and idealists. He was the first of secular thinkers clearly to conceive a range of unseen realities, which were the real homeland of the human soul. He believed that the things which are seen do but make manifest the things which are unseen. He tested the actual by the ideal and believed that in due season the ideal might become the actual, if only we keep the eye of the soul open and are not disobedient to the heavenly vision.[5]

"He first taught men," as Dean Inge says, "the conception of an unseen eternal world of which the visible world is only a pale copy." He was sadly conscious of the discrepancy between the shadowless order of the ideal and this deeply shadowed actual world, and sought as best he could to explain

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[4]L. F. Scott, Hastings's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article on "Gnosticism."

[5]For an illuminating treatment of Platonic philosophy see Caird's *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers.*

it. Sometimes he believes the fault to lie in matter itself, which not even God, though He was compelled to use it, could perfectly subdue to His purpose, as though the most perfect sculptor could do no perfect work with flawed marble. Or else he believed that we ourselves were once citizens of some higher state, bringing with us through rebirth haunting memories of a more perfect existence, but not the force to make our present life the equal of the life we had left behind, preserving just enough recollection of it to plague us with some sense of what we ought to be and are not.

It takes a poet justly to interpret a philosopher, and Wordsworth has put all this in three lines:

> "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting."

Plato thus anticipated that conflict between the ideal and the actual about which religious thought in the early Christian centuries was so much concerned. He did another thing of immense and lasting influence. In his more positive teaching ideals are neither shadowy abstractions, nor haunting recollections; they are luminous realities. He has taught us to believe that the true, the beautiful, and the good have an estate independent of the mind which conceives them.

This persuasion has had a practical force not easy to put into words. It has given those who have fallen under the spell of it the power to live content in a world in which there is so little of the ideal and still cherish their ideals undimmed because they believe that, somewhere and somehow, the ideal is timeless and triumphant. No confidence, I think, has gone farther to assure humanity in its troubled estate than just this; in the changed form in which Christianity entertains it, it is the music of noble hymns and the gleam of the Kingdom of God above dusty roads of pilgrimages.

These two contributions of Plato furnished a frame into which to set many things. He saw with clear and searching vision the deep abyss between the actual and the ideal; he taught his own time and all time since that the great ideals

possess an enduring reality. This gives to idealistic thought a strange two-edged quality. On the one side it may discover through its clear, fine vision what is absolutely true and perfect. On the other hand, the speculative mind may create for itself a range of fantastic reality, and then on the authority of Plato call such imaginings real. There is only one final test in all the pregnant possibility of the Platonic philosophy to discriminate between the true and the false, and that is the experience-tested correspondence between the fruitful rightness of life and the brave adventure of our thought. Gnosticism ignored that test, Christianity made it crucial; "by their fruit ye shall know them."

IV

Philo makes his contribution

An Alexandrian Jew, who died about the time St. Paul was beginning to preach, made his own contribution to the speculative confusion of the time, along with one contribution which Christianity has seized upon and kept. Philo was by no means the only Jew who came strongly under Greek influence, but he is remembered beyond the rest because he arranged a marriage between Greek philosophy and the Hebrew religion. That marriage was not permanent because of incompatibility of temperament, but it lasted long enough to create a curious family. He sought to distinguish between the Creator God of the Old Testament, who was certainly most intimately associated with the world and all its earthly ways, and the pure, unstained, unapproachable God of Platonic idealism, whose holiness permitted no taint of contact with our sin-stained order.

How, then, could the High and Holy God do His creative work or reach the world at all? Only through agents, by whom His power was "stepped down." Philo built a descending ladder between God and the world, a ladder, I suppose, of divine emanations, whatever that may mean, each in scale a little less divine. He or his school also furnished Christian thought the pregnant conception of the Logos, which Christianity took over from the prologue of the Fourth Gospel and has found creatively useful ever since.

It is only fair to say that the most painstaking scholars are not really agreed about what this old Alexandrian Jew really did think, probably because he had a freely ranging mind and was more concerned with the fascinating exercise of it in pathless regions, than the opinions of commentators not to be born for twenty centuries. Besides, how shall any two agree about what they see in the clouds? Dean Inge says "that a fair estimate of his teaching will acquit him of the puerile expedient of creating substitutes to act in God's place."[6]

Harnack says "the possibility . . . of being able to represent God as acting on matter . . . is reached . . . by the introduction of intermediate spiritual beings."[7] Where two such eminent scholars contradict each other flatly, the rest of us would better hold our peace. I should say the generality of accepted opinion to be on Harnack's side and that Philo did contribute to the general conception of a range of spiritual being between man and God, in which Christianity found itself entangled.

We approach then by such difficult and misty roads as these the actual situation which Christianity was called upon to face. Here is the conception of some deep abyss between God and the world; here is the conception of ideal realities existing apart from the mind which thinks them; here is the conception of a God reaching down to touch and change the world and needing agents less than Himself to reach it, and somewhere through it all an aching sense of human need for God's help. But this is by no means the whole story and no two scholars agree in telling it.

I should think an inquisitive month spent in Alexandria or Antioch or Ephesus, anytime during the first two Christian centuries would be worth pretty much everything which has been written about it since. Nothing ever happens in a vacuum. Religious controversies are carried on by living, disputing men, who are profoundly interested in what they are talking about—which is true of the time we are considering. The intelligentsia of the period did not get together to discuss

[6]Hastings's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics;* "Alexandrian Theology."

[7]*History of Dogma,* Vol. 1, p. 110.

economic theories, for they had none, nor to hear a poet read free verse, nor to debate strange theories of art, or defend heady experiments in conduct—though I am not quite so sure of this last statement.

They discussed religion wordily and endlessly and found abundant material and occasion for discussion, for there was religion everywhere and no single religion anywhere. There were Jews who were trying to think like Greeks and Greeks who were trying to believe like Jews. There were worshippers of old gods who no longer believed in the gods they worshipped, and seekers after new gods who did not know where to find them. There was no recognized intellectual or religious authority. They were perfectly free to change their minds and their opinions; they did not make a virtue of consistency, how could they? They were adventurers in the most marvellous of regions, facing the ultimate questions of life with no sure guidance, like aviators who take some general course above a stormy sea through storm-possessed skies.

The seekers of the time could find advice on any street corner. The ports of the Levant held "the gorgeous East in fee." The caravans which threaded the narrow, twisting streets of old cities brought rare merchandise from far lands with merchants as eager to exchange opinions as to exchange goods. Self-appointed teachers went about, carrying their special departments with them under a Greek cloak or a Persian headdress. They set up shop wherever they stopped, and discoursed about the Infinite sitting on a porch out of the sun or walking up and down deep shadowed pillared arcades, or perhaps, as Puvis de Chavannes loved to paint them, in cool olive groves washed by the sunlight.

V

A contribution from Persia

If an Athenian Greek happened to be among one of these argumentative groups, he would profess himself not too greatly concerned about the origin of evil, for he loved the sunlight and avoided shadowy places. Knowledge he thought to be the saving thing. A man's main business was to seek

knowledge and pursue it, since evil was sure to disappear with the growth of true understanding. If there had been a Persian present he would have advanced his engaging theories, for the Persian, loving light and hating darkness, had made a religion out of their timeless strife, or else found in them a symbol of a conflict far more subtle and profound. He would have maintained that the administration of the world was divided between two sovereignties—light and darkness, good and evil. These two sovereignties did not wage their strife alone, each of them had created an army to reinforce him. The Lord of light and goodness was attended by pure and bright spirits, the Lord of evil and darkness by a mischief-making retinue of demons, and men themselves were caught in the conflict of these two orders.

The Persian did anticipate some far-off victory of the god of light and goodness, and believed that a man might contribute to his victory by living in the empire of light, or postpone it by living in the empire of darkness. But if any among his hearers had protested that, while he loved the light, he too often chose the darkness in spite of himself, the Persian could have suggested no remedy. There were likely to have been others in such groups who were more hopeless than the Persian, accepting his dualism but seeing no hope of victory for either side.

Just here, some teacher or traveller from the Far East would argue that all existence is evil with no way to escape from the weariness of it save patiently, through a long sequence of birth and rebirth, to atone for all one's faults, be purged from all desire, and finally win the blessedness of being lost in the Absolute, as a spent swimmer sinks into the sea, finding the shore for which he set out in being lost in its depths. If he had been asked to make this a little more plain he would have found it difficult.

Kipling furnishes an illuminating illustration

Then there were the disciples of other Oriental religions going about, teaching the transmutation of souls, and man's descent down the long ladder from God, plane by plane, and his power to ascend again, rising from level to level

of spiritual perfection. In such a possible way as this, and certainly about such themes as these, the currents of religious discussion, with a ceaseless eddying surface play, ran through the East three hundred years ago. Historians have made a grave story of it, and it was; but I suspect in the actual happening it was more like Kipling's Mother-Lodge.

"We'd Bola Nath, Accountant,
An' Saul the Aden Jew,
An' Din Mo'ammed, draughtsman
Of the Survey Office too;
There was Babu Chuckerbutty,
An' Amir Singh the Sikh,
An' Castro from the fittin'-sheds,
The Roman Catholick!

* * * * * * *

"An' man on man got talkin'
Religion an' the rest,
An' every man comparin'
Of the God 'e knew the best.

* * * * * * *

"We'd say 'twas 'ighly curious,
An' we'd all ride 'ome to bed,
With Mo'ammed, God, an' Shiva
Changin' pickets in our 'ead."

An "assembled" religion

For there was an endless give and take betwixt them all. What the time was really trying to do, and to a measure succeeded in doing, was to take something from this system and something else from that, and so find an ample and sufficient faith. Gnosticism, or the science of divine wisdom, was an "assembled" religion. One difficulty in making a plain story of it lies in the variety of obscure elements out of which it was put together and the always changing quality of the combination. It is almost like looking into an April sky, where the celestial pageantry, woven out of light and shadow and blue immensity,

and shifting cloud masses, is always there—and never twice the same.

VI

A matter of life and death for Christianity

For us to-day the whole subject is interesting only as it reveals the fantastic and almost boundless capacity of the human mind to lose itself in its own dreams. For the Christian churches of the First and Second centuries it was a matter of life and death. Christianity was moving out to meet these competitive systems; there were sure to be Christians in the midst of all these arguing groups. What were they to say to it all and to do with it all? Most directly to the point, was the general religious mind of the time with its passion for assimilation, to capture Christianity, rob it of its individuality, and lose it also in the clouds? The future of Christianity hung upon the answer to just that question.

We must try to recapture their exact situation. The Christian had as yet no creed. The materials out of which his doctrines were finally to be created were as various as the plain ethical teachings of the parables and the Sermon on the Mount, as simple as the father love of the parable of the Prodigal Son, as profound as the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, as audacious in sheer sweep of speculation as the loftiest passages in the letters of St. Paul, and always at the heart of it all a Galilean carpenter, who died on a cross.

Christianity had not as yet established its frontiers in any direction; it was strategically open to invasion and was a possession to be coveted. It offered a way of redemption to an age seeking deliverance; it was immeasurably richer than any other religion in a luminous presentation of the higher life; it had elements to afford an opportunity for far-ranging speculation. There was a place, in the space between God and man, which Gnosticism was trying to bridge, for Jesus Christ. He could rule among the principalities and powers on some throne of wisdom and goodness. No wonder Gnosticism solicited an alliance with this new and struggling faith, but it wanted to write the treaty in its own terms.

Should Christianity fight or make an alliance?

Christianity was not at first unwilling. The mind of the time supplied it with alluring suggestions. St. Paul himself acted as liaison officer, took his own flights into rarified regions, and admitted words useful for his own purposes, which were a little like the famous wooden horse to let the Greeks into Troy. There was a menace to the integrity of Christianity in the hidden heart of them, if only those who had no such safeguards as the Apostle should take and use them. In fact, Paul himself realized the danger and spoke, in no uncertain tone, of those who would make spoil of the Church through philosophy and vain deceit, in the very Epistle which reflects most strongly something like Gnostic influence over his own mind.[8]

But Christianity drew back in time, asserted its independence and won it, purging itself as it went on of dangerous elements in its own life. The errors of Gnosticism were too many for the Church to endure, the gulf between Christianity and Gnosticism too deep to be bridged. Christianity won through the clear-visioned who saw the danger; through the creation of the New Testament canon which entrenched the Church behind the authority of Christ and the Apostles; through strong-minded leaders who began to build up a definite Christian doctrine. It won through the tightening discipline of the Church; through its own matchless supremacy over all its competitors; through its entire self-sufficiency and the purifying power of time.

The effect of the struggle in the Christian mind

Scott, in the article already quoted, summarizes the effect of this controversy upon the Christian mind tersely and finally. It led to the strengthening of the Catholic idea, hastened the development of the Episcopal form of government, revealed to the Church its needs of authoritative standards of faiths. It compelled the Church "to sift and collect the genuine documents of the primitive age" and saved the Old Testament as a book for Christian use. It strengthened the tendency to asceticism and introduced into Chris-

[8]There is really more plausible evidence for Paul's use of material common to the gnostic speculation of his time than for his general use of mystery terms.

tianity mystical elements not native to it; it supported sacramentarianism and developed unduly the theological temper. The Church was making up its mind about Christ but it was losing the Christian mind.

Finally, though this stormy period stiffened the Church in its own ways and authority, it checked the free play of the Christian mind. In such ways as these Christianity became a free and independent sovereign religious state. It now began to deal with its own internal affairs and had enough to occupy its attention. The materials out of which to create a distinctly Christian theology were now generally assembled but not yet articulated. Christianity was now Jesus Christ's religion, but what should the devout think of Jesus Christ? The first crucial question had been what would Christianity do with itself or permit to be done. The crucial question now was what Christianity would do with Jesus Christ or permit to be done. Theologically the story of the next three hundred years is the story of the Church making up its mind about Jesus Christ.

VII

The Church begins to make up its mind about Jesus Christ

These final controversies shaped themselves slowly, as great controversies always do. There was legitimate room for differences of opinion in regard to the nature and person of Christ. The Gospels themselves furnish a confusing range of possible positions, from St. Mark's "Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee," whose divine Sonship was validated by a voice from the open skies, to the "Word made flesh" of the prologue to the Fourth Gospel. And somewhere between the two is the Christ Jesus of St. Paul, "who being in the form of God was made in the likeness of man, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

In the next place these very speculations we have been considering offered a scheme in which Jesus Christ might be established at the summit of all created beings, but still a little less than God. The Church had generally freed itself from this murky range of speculation in its conflict with Gnosticism,

but there remained, to go back to our figure of the doctrinal controversies as a mountain range, one topmost peak still cloud-possessed. What was hidden in the heart of the infinite mystery of the relation between Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of God, and His Father?

A great faith is a great answer to a great need

A great faith, finally affirmed through a long and questing period, always has, at the heart of it, a great answer to a great question. Creeds are not finally drawn by church councils. They are drawn by the needs of the soul itself; they meet imperious spiritual necessities with imperial assurances; they are never, through the very nature of them, able completely to make articulate their elements of supreme assurance. Something is always behind them which escapes their fencing phrases. This is true of what the theologian calls the controversy over the Nature and Person of Christ.

The fatal error

The most dangerous thing in all the web of speculation from which Christianity sought to disentangle itself, was its profound and final separation of God from the world. The true God, the High and Holy, according to that speculation, lived far and apart, wrapped up in His own stainless and serene aloofness. He reached us and our world only in some lower and less godlike form. When He finally reached and touched us, whether for creation, comradeship, or redemption, He was no longer the near and loving fulness of the Divine but some far removed and lesser part of Himself. A belief like this put an abyss between God and the world and, if there is an abyss between God and the world, religion is the most futile thing in the world and Christianity the most futile of religions. For Christianity is nothing at all if it be not a confidence in a God so near to us that He might speak through human lips, and be known in the wonder of a life lived between Bethlehem and Calvary.

Christian thought faces the supreme issue

Here was an issue so profound that the Church had no choice but to fight it out, though it fought it out at the last within its own frontiers and at sore cost both to its fraternity and its Christian grace. The significance of the

struggle is obscured by the forms it took. The creeds which make the victory of orthodox Christianity articulate are but windows through which we see darkly. Clouds which, I suppose, must always veil the human mind as it seeks to understand the mystery of the divine nature do still lie across those high regions in which the final controversies of the theologians were carried through to a finish, but somewhere through the cloud there gleams the light of the supreme spiritual confidence of humanity; God is not remote but imminent, and Jesus Christ is His revelation in a profound unity of nature, which makes Him a true connecting link between the human and the Divine.

VIII

Arius begins the struggle

One Arius, a Presbyter of Alexandria, supplied the occasion which compelled the Church to a governing formulation of its mind about Jesus Christ. Arius was an old man, "tall and thin, of melancholy looks and an aspect which showed traces of his austerity."[9] He had a way of wearing plain clothes and speaking very gently. He was blameless in life and of exemplary piety; but what he began shook the Church and made history. Very likely it all began in his prophetlike jealousy for God, his love of clear horizons, his desire for clean-cut definition. He could not bear to have the unity of God violated by any distinction inside the divine nature or by any contact with the world.[10] His hard use of words led him to startling conclusions.

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[9]Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 176.

[10]Duchesne, *The Early History of the Church*, Vol. II, p. 99. Harnack draws much the same picture. Dorner goes straight for the doctrines. What Arius looked like is a detail for him. For the theologically minded reader some statement of the doctrinal issues involved, from recognized authorities, may be interesting. Arius got his doubtful doctrine from one Lucian ("the most learned man in the East") who founded a theological seminary in Antioch. The Pauline tradition was strong in Antioch and Lucian began with Paul's Christology. (For a suggestive interpretation of that in an unusual way, see Guignebert's *Christianity*, pp. 100-103.) Lucian united St. Paul and the first eighteen verses of the Gospel according to St. John and so created a fixed form of doctrine. Lucian taught a most distinguished group of pupils, who remembered him gratefully. He suffered martyrdom and thus missed the chance to become a heretic himself. Arius carried his master's teaching out into the field of controversy.

Since Jesus Christ was the Son of God there must have been a time when God was not yet the Father. He would not allow any equality of nature between the Father and the Son. One can quote the words he uses, but they do not mean as much for us as they mean to him and his subtle distinctions escape us.

One could quote from all the theologians who from his time to ours have tried to put the issues of the controversy in plain words and something would still be missing. But I take the substance of his doctrine to be that God did not fully reach the world in Jesus Christ; he enlarged upon all this in ways which furnished a battle cry to his followers and a challenge to his opponents.[11]

The implications of Arius's position are unexpectedly far-

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[11]He held (a) God the Only One, without beginning and eternal; (b) God can put nothing of His own nature into the created; (c) God created an agent by which other creatures could be created, because the creatures could not endure the unmediated contact of the Godhead; (d) the Son is that agent; (e) "As regards His substance, the Son is consequently . . . totally separated and different from the substance or nature of the Father," otherwise there would be two Gods; (f) the Son is thus not truly God; (g) He is the perfect creature. (So Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Vol. IV., pp. 14–19.)

Duchesne puts it in this way: "God is One, eternal and unbegotten. Other beings are His creatures, the Logos first of all. Like the other creatures the Logos was taken out of nothingness and not from the Divine Substance; there was a time when He was not. He was created not necessarily but voluntarily, Himself a creature of God. He is the creator of all other beings, and this relationship justifies the title of God, which is improperly given Him. God adopted Him as Son in prevision of His merits, for He is free, susceptible of change, and it is by His own will that He determined Himself on the side of good. (*The Early History of the Church*, Vol. II, p. 100.) There is more and there are others; this should be enough.

Athanasius held, on the contrary, that the Son is, first, co-eternal with the Father, and, second, of the substance of the Father, for otherwise He would not be God at all; third, He is by His own nature in all points similarly constituted as the Father, and, finally, He is all this because He has *One and the same substance* in common with the Father, and together with Him constitutes a unity. (Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Vol. IV, p. 32.)

All this is deep water. The essence of the contention is veiled in some speculative struggle of the human mind to pass beyond its own limits. The words which became battle cries in the streets of Alexandria have lost their meanings through translation of language, race, and time. Perhaps, "undergirding-reality-of-nature" might do for "substance." By that test our whole modern thought is Athanasian rather than Arian. The doctrine of the imminence of God is the key to it all.

> "Speak to him, thou, for He hearest and spirit with spirit can meet,
> Nearer is He than breathing, and closer than hands or feet."

Pa...
4835 East ...
Long Beach, Calif...

reaching. There is no final alternative to the philosophy of which he was in his own time the theological voice, save the scientific mechanicism of our own time which leaves personality a puzzle. "Athanasius," says Harnack, "staked his life on the faith that God Himself was entered into humanity." The embattled Christianity of the Fourth Century won a position which philosophy has since consolidated and science is coming slowly to support; but there was a logical clarity in Arius's contentions which gave them great popular power.

The controversy spreads; the emperor intervenes

They began to be discussed in the streets of Alexandria and to sweep an ever-widening circle until the whole of Eastern Christendom was drawn into the controversy. The Emperor of the East took notice of it; he besought the Church authorities to compose differences which threatened the peace and good name of the Church and seriously disturbed his own peace of mind. "Restore to me my peaceful days and my undisturbed nights, and do not allow me to spend what remains of my life in joylessness." But Constantine was to learn how theologians, once they get going, take little account of an emperor's insomnia.

But the bishops came at his call; there were three hundred of them, assembled from lands to which a millennium and a half have given new names, from bishoprics which live only as haunting memories, from kingdoms which have been only dust and recollection for a thousand years.

They met in a great hall of the king's palace, and their deliberations were invested with pomp and dignity. The time (325 A. D.,) was so near the last great persecution that those who had suffered bitterly for their faith sat in the council. There was a Syrian with burned hands, an Egyptian blind in one eye and lame from his sufferings in the mines.[12] The Emperor himself took his place at the head of the hall supported by bishops, and not too far removed from his attendant guards —for there was the glint of steel through the pacific councils of the Church.

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[12]Abbé Duchesne, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p. 114.

There was also sword play of another sort: the clash of mind on mind. And in such ways as these, doubtless with many informal consultations and grave deliberations of committees with long-drawn examinations of every proposition suggested, and anxious searchings for words to bear a burden which words were never meant to bear at all, the council got its work done, and thereafter the faith of the Church was no longer a nebulous thing to be discussed and disagreed about, but a solidly articulate thing to be accepted and obeyed.

IX

The Church followed the line of necessity

Now the significance of all that for us is what this meant for the Church itself. Given all the conditions, it was necessary for its temporal salvation, just as those who formulate the creeds believed them necessary for eternal salvation. There is no need to say that one council did not end the matter. The tides of victory, or defeat, ebbed and flowed. Secular interests came in with enormous power, and Athanasius, who seemed to-day triumphant, was to-morrow alone against the world. The arbitrament of arms entered into the remote outcome, when Goths and Franks, who were as incapable of understanding the subtle significance of the causes for which they fought as they would be incapable of understanding Einstein's theory of relativity, stood up against one another manfully for the glory of God and the faith once delivered to the saints.

The supreme thing done

And yet in all this one enormous thing got itself accomplished. God was not to be separated from His world by an abyss to be crossed only by a cloud-built bridge of speculation. Humanity was not to be left spiritually orphaned, there was a living way between the human divine, and Jesus Christ that way. He was one with the Father in consubstantial Deity, and one with man in an actuality of human experience, which was no shadow at all but flesh of our flesh and pain of our pain. Facing now one front and now another, the Church main-

tained this central position, writing down contradictory affirmations in her historic formularies with a superb disregard of the power of the human reason to reconcile them, driven thereto by an instinct deeper than reason itself; the demand of the soul that God should not be shut up in an empty infinitude of lonely power and goodness, nor man be left on the marge of the spiritual order with no way to God, when he needed God so much.

Authority sanctions the creeds

Once these positions were secured "through travail, toil and pain," the Church invested them with something more than her own sacrosanct authority. They were in truth very accents of the Holy Ghost. Those who denied them were anathema. It was the business of Pope and patriarch to defend them at any cost. They became a fence to shut out the false and shut in the true. They were a test to separate humanity as a shepherd separates his sheep and his goats, on the Day of Judgment itself. And the influence of all this upon Christianity ever since has been determinative and inescapable.

The West makes its contribution

The doctrinization of Christianity did not end, of course, with the Council of Constantinople. The East being speculative, greatly under the influence of the Greek mind, strongly assailed by Gnosticism and in great danger of being lost therein, secured itself through its final pronouncements upon the person and nature of Christ. The West, having another temper and falling greatly under the influence of Augustine, gave itself gravely to the consideration of man's nature and estate, his power to do anything good in and for himself, and the place of his own will in the struggle for salvation, and finally agreed that we are helplessly fallen, "having no hope and without God in the world," save as He should, in His infinite mercy, reach down and pluck out of destruction those whom He had in the timeless mystery of His purpose determined to save.[13]

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[13]That sentence anticipates later developments and would probably provoke a specialist.

How Augustine learned Augustinianism

Once more you must seek the vital thing behind all this rigidity of doctrine. The key to it is as much in Augustine's long struggle with his lesser and clay-encumbered self, as any other single thing, for if any man ever learned his own helplessness in the furnace of temptation Augustine learned his. And what is pure molten spirit in the Confessions becomes rigidity of doctrine in the system of faith to which his name has been given. But there was an immense force in the doctrine for all that, for, as the faith of it was sincerely entertained, it brought Western Christendom for a thousand years emptied of spiritual pride, and deeply conscious of its needs, as a suppliant to the mercy of God. There were such disciplines in it as hard, proud races needed, and a way of subduing man's will to God's purposes which has given distinct character to all those who have entertained it.

In such ways as these, in both the East and the West, the Church formulated her faith, and in these formulations are footings of all Christian theology for a millennium and a half. The Church was thus made credo-centric, which means, perhaps, that the Church's thinkers were turned back upon her creeds for the material of their speculation. Certain boundaries were established which they could not pass and, although the free movement of theological thought was thereby greatly limited, it was prevented from disastrous excursions, the very license of which would have undone the solidity of the Church's faith. And, indeed, there was enough and more in the implication of these creeds to occupy the Church's mind.

How Christianity has changed

The authoritative tests of Christianity were thus carried into purely doctrinal regions. Christianity became not so much a system of knowledge as a system of belief—the power to believe without question, and even with an excess of credulity, became a test of Christian devotion. Beyond any doubt, the robust mental fibre of the Christian intellect has suffered in this process, but there have been, probably down to our time, gains which compensated for the loss. The creeds themselves became tests

of communion with the true Church, though they were the particular concern of the clergy rather than the laity.

The creeds become a test of communion with the Holy Catholic Church

In the beginning the catholicity of a church was guaranteed by the subscription of its bishop to the historic creeds. A little later obedience to the Pope carried everything else with it. As long as the laity were in faithful communion with Mother Church, partaking of her sacraments, confessing to her priests, and submitting to her ordinances, they were not encouraged to concern themselves about the mysteries of her faith. Only the adventurous and strong-minded could manage heresy at all during the Middle Ages, and those who did found the cost of it so great as generally to discourage others who might have been like-minded.

X

The differences between Protestantism and Catholicism not in doctrine

The differences between Protestantism and Catholicism in substance of doctrine are not fundamental. Protestantism in all its branches continued the historic faith of Christianity. It not only continued that faith, but enlarged upon it with a degree of detail into which the historic creeds never entered. In general it emphasized the importance of right doctrine in a way Latin Catholicism had possibly ceased to insist upon. Protestantism stripped Christianity more or less bare of all that rich garmenture and support of habit, liturgy, and the mystic authority of the Church, in which the devout of centuries had found their spiritual at-homeness and left its own too largely, only a "Confession"—Augsburg, Anglican, Westminster—to cling to; the support was doctrinally strong but sharp-edged and cold to touch.

The Protestant creeds reflect also, in their excess of detail, the situation and forces which created them. All creeds are battle won, but the later belong to a new series of holy wars. They are the self-definition and self-justification of the Angli-

can, Lutheran or Reformed churches. They are also, all of them, as were the historic creeds, tests of orthodox communion. They delimit the faithful in Germany, Geneva, or England from all the rest of the world.

In its time of majestic unity the Latin Catholic Church had no need to draw any frontiers, either to shut in or to shut out, it was the whole of Western Christendom. But no one of the Protestant churches was the whole of anything—except itself—and, therefore, the need of strongly marked frontiers of faith was the more necessary; these new communions needed, in a sadly troubled time, to be held together by some immensely constraining power. And the only constraining power they could write down in so many words was their creeds.

These creeds were, moreover, written by men of a strong theological bent, rejoicing in a new discovery and use of the Old and New Testament, and finding therein both their authority and their sure defense. The Bible was for them what popes and cardinals and bishops and the old deep-rooted brooding, directing, and unchallenged ways of the Catholic Church had been to the faithful for centuries. The old Church had everything; they had nothing but their Bibles, their high souls, a new sense of spiritual destiny.

Christianity redefined in doctrine

No wonder, then, that they wrought their creeds out of its pages, finding what seemed to them therein the ultimate truth of God, and giving to it such direction and application as the genius of their leaders discovered. The result was a redefinition of Christianity in terms of doctrine along with a new test of Christian rightness in terms of the acceptance of that doctrine. Doctrinal tests were thus brought strongly to bear upon the Protestant laity. A man was a Catholic through the force of old association maintained through a many-sided support; he belonged to a new communion because he accepted its doctrinal standards. (This, of course, to begin with; later, association and corporate habit came strongly into action on the Protestant side.)

Protestantism created a theologically minded laity

He must also be able to give a reason for the faith that was in him, which made the laity theologically minded, and he must believe strongly enough to bear upon occasion costly testimony to the integrity of his faith. If we are tempted sometimes to see all this in too cold a light, we must remember what loyalties and passions were written into these creeds, and what they meant to the men who professed them and in what agony they sometimes kept the faith.

XI

There has been no opportunity, in this chapter, to consider how far all this has departed from the simplicities of the parables and the Sermon on the Mount, or how much essential Christianity has been lost out in the process, or what this excessive emphasis upon doctrine has cost the Christian Church as a whole. A sober recital of the bitterness, hatreds, antagonisms, needless divisions, and more than needless martyrdom which have either accompanied this process or grown out of it would be, I suppose, the most sombre chapter in the quest for the soul for God—and all this was done in the name of the gentleness and love of Jesus Christ.

Its effect upon the Christian mind

I have sought to suggest the effect of doctrinal development upon the Christian mind as we traced the growth of it. It has excessively developed an argumentative and speculative temper. It has called the Christian mind away from the representative simplicities of the teaching of Jesus. The mind of Christ has been lost in the mind of the Church Fathers and other system-making divines. Moreover, Christianity has inherited an excess baggage train of doctrinal survivals, which hampers it sadly in its present campaign. If Christianity is to reassert its transformed power over an age losing the sense of the reality of anything but matter and force, it needs weapons forged and tempered in the Twentieth and not the Fourth Century.

Doctrines have kept Christianity undissolved

But the doctrines and the creeds have kept alive the spirit which will not consent to lose itself in matter and force. A doctrineless religion would not have spanned two millenniums undissolved. And there has always been an element in Christian doctrine beyond arid intellectualism. There has been an element of reverence and wonder, and an awesome sense of a range of reality hid behind a light-touched cloud of mystery. The historic creeds have carried the central truths of Christianity. They have saved the assurance of the saving nearness of God to men; they have not left us in a world the Divine cannot reach and change. Many of these phrases have a spacious inclusiveness to make them capable of retranslation into the language of our own time.

They secure for us also the sense of unbroken continuities in the development of Christianity. Any religion, if it is not lost in some mystic emotion, must have an intellectual element and be capable of some doctrinal formulation. Religion needs a backbone, or else it needs two. Faith and good works sustain the structure of it and faith will always make itself a creed. The danger in doctrine is an excess of detail and an unwillingness to submit to reëxamination.

But one may say, with a just restraint, that the inherited Christian mind is, doctrinally, too rigid and too much given to test everything by one test, which was not outstanding in the mind of Christ. The Western mind generally has been taught too inclusively to define Christianity in doctrinal terms. Christianity finds its approach to the modern mind made difficult for just this reason. Signs are not wanting that the doctrinal mind is trying to change all this, or else is being dissolved in sciences, philosophies, and philanthropies. It will be the task of the Christian teachers of the future to see that this does not go too far.

The instinct which led the dreaming and speculating centuries, to save itself for the future through the definition of its faith for the world to lay hold of, was a sound instinct. The confidences of Christianity are still its sheet anchor, and its distinctive power as a religion.

Chapter VII

CHRISTIANITY FINDS A CHURCH MIND AND BECOMES AN IMPERIAL ORGANIZATION

Christianity creates the Church

THE Fourth and Fifth centuries gave the Christian mind a doctrinal impress it has never since lost. Christianity was authoritatively defined as a system of beliefs which the Church had a power to enforce. Orthodoxy took the throne and began a long administration, but something went along with doctrine and doctrinal development both to create and support it and, finally, to hold the creeds themselves in solution. The trouble is to find a name for it. If you say that by the Fifth Century Christianity had substantially perfected its organization on every front, and the Church Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic stood four-square to the world, you have said everything and explained next to nothing.

The world has really never known Christianity apart from the Church, nor has Christianity ever really known itself apart from the Church. The identification of the two is perhaps more complete than any other ideal or institution of human society. The Christian mind carries, so to speak, a content of church-mindedness which makes the two inseparable. Through this long discipline the Church has come to possess a marvellously many-sided appeal; it appeals to the imagination, to pride and the confidence of power, to inbred loyalties and tenacious instincts of conformity. It is prayer and praise and holy orders and hallowed ceremonials. It is cathedrals whose stone steps have been worn deep by the feet of the faithful and about whose walls the tides of humanity have ebbed and flowed for centuries, whose very towers have been undone by rain and frost, whose very buttresses support some

quiet growth of herbage. Or else it is a plain meetinghouse which men love only because it shelters their faith and their memories. Or else it is an ideal Christian fellowship and made manifest in force and form.

The Church is, besides, two thousand years of history which is, perhaps, the most impressive element in its awesome sovereignty. The impression which cumulative history makes upon the mind is always an unfailing source of great corporate loyalties and their sure support. The spirit of nationalism is, in some ways, a better illustration of this than even the Church. Any strongly defined national mind is the creation of centuries. The centuries thus incarnate do not die; they live in their appeal to the imagination through their history and wealth of association. A flag which has been victoriously upheld in a hundred wars and followed a dominant race around the world has a power to master the imagination and create commanding loyalties because of the very backgrounds of history against which it is spread by the winds.

The secret of the Church's power over humanity

The Church asserts its power over humanity in just such ways as these, with something of its own no nation dares to claim. It is the one continuing institution to survive the ruin of the classic world and bridge the formlessness of the dark ages. In its most majestic period, the Church imposed its unity upon the whole of Western Europe and supplied an undergirding feeling of belonging to one august order, to all sorts and conditions of people, from Iceland to the Adriatic.

The ideal of the unity of the Church survives its divisions

When this grandiose conception was shattered something had been accomplished which still persists. The conception of the Church had been invested with mystic power, the unity of it established as an ideal never to be surrendered.

There is difficulty enough in following the growth of the Church in detail during its first one hundred years. The fragile records of the time between the end of the Old Testament and the creation of a Church literature have been subject to all

the hazards which attend the adventure of any document down the stream of time; the wonder is that the historian has been able to recover so much. He is a little like the archæologist who undertakes to reconstruct a vanished civilization from its sifted dust. Naturally there is room in such a process for the most arresting differences of opinion. In what follows we shall consider, first, the growth of Church organization, and then the development of worship and Christian life within the organization, though actually the two growths are inseparable.

I

Backgrounds of the Church in Roman society

Specialists in Church history have assembled for us secular elements in Roman society which might have supplied some precedent and habit for the organization of primitive Christians. The Roman State religion was an established church with a certain uniformity of organization and ritual throughout the empire. But within this ample form there were a great variety of private religious societies, with their own peculiar organizations and privileges.

The empire also licensed charitable and fraternal organizations, very much like the fraternal organizations of our own time. Social distinctions were left outside the lodge door, slaves and masters met as equals, called one another brother and sister, used their dues for fraternal needs, were self-governing under the terms of their licenses and had a power of discipline over their members. They gave peculiar honour to their office bearers and were generally under the protection of some deity or other. Such associations met a variety of needs; they wove a half-hidden web of human contact across the impersonal vastness of the empire; they associated the wearing routine of lowly life with the protective consideration of the gods; above all, they saved life from colourless loneliness.[1]

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[1]Lindsay, *The Church and Its Ministry in the Early Centuries*, p. 125; also Dill.

Christian churches had from the first something particularly their own

The members of the early churches were undoubtedly drawn from such fellowships as these, and brought their habits of associations with them; but the Christian Church carried with it from the first the sense of more than human sanctions. It was no mere association of the believing and the devout, taking form from old habit; it was a spirit-filled reality, validated by the power of God. There is only the slightest testimony in the Gospels that Jesus ever contemplated the Church at all. Meanings may be strained to support that contention, but their force is doubtful. The word "church" is used twice in the Gospels, both times in Matthew, and once there in a very general way. It occurs in the Book of Acts, either singular or plural, twenty-four times; but in the letters of St. Paul the Church and the churches are constantly in evidence.

Paul's churches were actually small groups of unconsidered folk scattered through western Asia Minor and Greece. They had nothing at all except their faith and their courage with which we associate the conception of a church to-day, and yet the Apostle saw them in a rare and mystic light. For him they were "the Body of Christ," invested with a sanctity which attached to the very presence of Christ, His Incarnation again in the world and His instrument for the perfection of His purposes.

The influence of Paul's great figure

It is impossible to overestimate the influence which this more than vital figure of the Apostles has had upon Christian thinking; it has enriched the Church's consciousness of its own mission, idealized all ecclesiastical fellowships, and continued the Apostle's passion that the Church should be a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. It has strengthened the Church's sense of unity in its relatively undivided periods and reproached its divisions in its time of dismemberment. How can the Body of Christ be divided? This sense of the sanctity of the Church came quickly into action. By the time of the Book of Revelation each church had its own angel, as though there were especially appointed mediators

between earth and heaven, to carry up to the throne of God the affairs of the Church in Ephesus and Smyrna and Pergamos and bring back rebuke or assurance. There are no words at all, save the words in which these things are said of the Church, to indicate how soon or how deeply it was saturated with the sense of being much more than just a merely human organization. If anything is the Body of Christ, it is immediately invested, for the devout, with sanctities which belong to the imagination and to elemental reverences, rather than to reason.

II

In general, the picture of the growth of the Church in the New Testament is sufficiently clear. The churches are, to begin with, more or less isolated groups, with an emerging sense of comradeship and uncertain lines of mutual communication. They want to be in favour and communion with the Jerusalem brotherhood but they are not administered from Jerusalem or any other centre. As long as St. Paul lived, he went to and fro among his churches and so bound them together by bonds which he himself supplied; if he could do no more, he bound them together in his prayers.

There was always some movement of members of the early Christian communities from one city to another. Certain names in those fascinating lists at the end of the Pauline Epistles appear first in one locality and then in another. In such ways as these the churches were being woven into a unity with a web of personal knowledge and association. There was, of course, a beginning of oversight, and the development of what we might call a body of clergy. Familiar names began to appear, deacons and elders and bishops, every one of them, except the deacons, to furnish an occasion for controversies still carried on with a holy ardour.

Any primitive Christian church developed with a sense of religious entirety which is no longer possible to any one communion, even the Catholic. Its membership anywhere were parts of one fellowship, which gives to the phrase "the local

church," over whose organization and official control there has been, first and last, so much controversy, a character always to be kept in mind. Certain things were bound to happen. The numerical growth of the Church from local centres would reach out to meet the numerical growth of the Church from other centres.

The churches weave their web across the empire

At first the distances between them would be but slightly spanned, as though a thread had been blown out by the wind to reach and attach itself to something farther on, but the empty spaces filled in, and the fragile web became a tenacious fabric bright with holy ardour, red with the blood of the Saints. The unquenchable missionary ardour of the Church won the empire step by step, through an ardour of soul minted into agonies of martyrdom. There were times when imperial opposition seemed to have brought the Church to a standstill, but never for long. If it disappeared for a little into the catacombs of Rome, it emerged with a stronger current.

Many things combined to intensify the self-consciousness of the Church. For one thing, the abysmal contrast between the Church and everything else. It never for a moment recognized any relationship between itself and the other religions of the Empire nor offered them any truce in its drive. Angus brings this out strongly as one of the reasons for the victory of Christianity over rival faiths.[2]

The clear-cut position of the early Church

There were no half-Christianized border lines between the Church and the world. Western civilization has now been long enough under the influence of Christianity to take its general moral colour, and Christianity, generally, reflects the interests and standards of secular society. There is between the Church and the world an intermediate region of half light and half shadow. That was not so two thousand years ago. The Church was not delimited as it is with us by the opposing frontier of another communion, but Christianity, religiously and ethically, met paganism on a sharply drawn front

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[2]Angus, *The Mystery Religions and Christianity*, pp. 277 *et seq.*

line to be clearly followed. The sense of being entirely inside its own line intensified the Church's self-consciousness.

The isolated position of early Christians

The first Christians had nothing else to belong to. They were in the Empire but not of it; their citizenship was in Heaven. The extreme and almost ecstatic detachment of first generation Christianity from the affairs of this world could not, of course, persist. There are practical injunctions to good citizenship in the New Testament epistles. The constant years drew the Church reluctantly back into the current of the going human enterprise, but even so, there was probably no longer anywhere in the Empire, toward the end of it, the same great kindling sense of being a Roman which attached to Roman citizenship in the noontide of Roman glory.

In the East the Empire had always overlaid racial inheritances strongly enough to qualify the loyalties of the East. How could an Egyptian, with what dim memories he had of a culture which had seen the Pyramids grow old, lose himself entirely in this upstart Empire from the West? The Jew felt all this even more strongly, and generally, as Christianity developed, the Empire began to fret away at its margins, like a garment eaten of moths. In due course of time it so divided its administrations as to wound fatally its awesome unity.

What was there, then, for a man to belong to in a world like that? Well, he could belong to the Christian Church, which was, St. Augustine would presently tell him, independent of the mutations of empires and destined to endure though Rome were violated. This, too, deepened the self-consciousness of the Church, and there was always that mystic thing of which St. Paul had spoken—the Church was the Body of Christ.

III

For the purpose of a study like this the question of any divine authority for particular forms of ecclesiastic organization may be disregarded. The highly competitive theories which have so divided Christendom are themselves of a late

slow growth. No form of administration can be carried back to the mind of Christ without enormous assumptions, which beg the case to begin with. St. Paul's interests lay in other regions. New Testament records report a church—or churches—interested in administrations, but, by no means, offering either the bishop or the elder as the one foundation of the Church.

The Church inherited the Roman instinct for organization

The Church was taking over lands and populations which had a sound instinct for organization and old ways of effecting it. Naturally it would effect an organization of its own. Everything else being equal, the Church would adapt to its own uses, and from stage to stage, such working methods as had already justified themselves in civil administration. Without much doubt, the habits of administration in Greek cities and Jewish synagogues and Roman confraternities all combined to give colour and direction to the organization of the Church. But the Church, having its own genius of statesmanship, adapted these to its own uses, and, when they had been long in action and hallowed by the high sanction of time, invested them with divine authority and maintained that the Church never had existed and never could exist without them, finding a proper quotation from the Fathers or the New Testament to justify the contention.

Ecclesiastical organization was centralized and authority solidified by the drive of Roman persecution. The Church under fire, and the Church was again and again under fire in a most literal way, needed a strong discipline and an adequate leadership. When any period of persecution was over, and the Church had a season of peace in which to gather itself together, the difficult question of dealing with those who had lapsed and sought to be again admitted to the Church's communion needed a strong final authority for adjudication.[3]

The intellectual struggles through which Christianity con-

[3]These general statements are not documented. They represent a really long reading of widely divergent positions. I have studied accepted authorities of many schools including Alzog's strong statement of the Roman Catholic position. Guignebert in his *Christianity*, Chap. VII, condenses the whole process luminously.

solidated its own doctrinal positions strengthened the authority of the Church. In the welter of ideas which characterized the early centuries a merely spirit-guided ministry was a source of danger. There were so many kinds of spirit in action—some authority was needed to distinguish between the true and the false. Teachers were placed under Church authority; public worship was centralized and the government of the congregations entrusted to bishops and the Church began to take those lines against heretics which were to lead so far and into such cruel issues.[4]

The Church asserts its power of discipline

In such ways as these systems of discipline were developed and the Church became a thing to be seen and heard and felt. Doctrinal controversies, diverse as they were, eventually strengthened the discipline of the Church and heightened its sense of unity. Once a creed was drawn, something or somebody had to back it up, and this was the Church's business through her bishops. The wing of the Church which professed and defended the orthodox creed was naturally, after the creeds were universally recognized as orthodox, the true Church. It was really called "The Great Church" during the period of acute creedal controversy. That is an illuminating phrase, for there were currents of Christianity which long persisted in flowing through unorthodox channels. Some of these slowly, and under a good deal of compulsion, joined the main stream. Others lost themselves in some disintegration of their own organization, or the society of which they were a part.

In general, for this is a useful figure, there was always a main Christian stream, but there were for a long period all sorts of side movements. One could almost diagram Christian history on this scheme with main lines and side lines, sometimes a perfect tangle of them. The main line was the Great Church, later the Catholic Church. The side lines were survivals and protests and heresies, whose names are more curious than the movements themselves being the despair of everyone save the

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[4]Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. II, p. 223.

specialist in Christian doctrine and, I should think, occasionally his despair also. The main thing in this connection is that all this ferment of loyalty and protest did contribute to the Church's sense of unity, by offering an opposition against which the Great Church consolidated its position. A heretic is often more useful to those in authority than blameless orthodoxy.

The development of the Church unbroken

The keen-edged self-consciousness of the Church has long been forged and tempered in the heat of controversy. A process so begun did not end until Rome had reasserted her temporal empire in religious things, a pope ruled from the seat of the Cæsars, with old Roman provinces for the dioceses of his bishops, and the deathless prestige of Rome for one more sanction to his power. "The ghost of the Roman Empire," said Hobbs, "sitting crowned upon the grave thereof." This was the form in which the Christianity of a thousand years developed its many-sided life.

IV

There would be, very likely, a general agreement among church historians of almost every school as to the substance of these later paragraphs, but often radical disagreement with the implications of them. If you write Church history, they would say, in terms of merely historic development, what becomes of the divine element in it? Which is a fair enough question. I would answer that the divine element is exactly where it is and where it must be, in all that divinely given wisdom and guidance which brought the Church through changing times and countless perils in such a way as to insure its growth, enable its service to humanity, and make it, on the whole, an increasing revelation of the Christian spirit.

The Divine acts in human affairs through human personality as it follows some gleam of the heavenly vision in furtherance of such affairs as prove themselves finally to have been

God's ends. There is no sure way of knowing, in the beginning, whether any enterprise conditioned by human nature will turn out God's enterprise; the proof is in the issue. The divinity of it all is not in the institution, but in the power of the human spirit to become God's instruments through all the welter of human ways.

The strategic question in Church history

But I am seeking here merely to find out how the Christian mind, as we defined it to begin with, has become what it is to-day, and here is one of the ways in which the Christian mind has been made. The whole vexing question of bishops and popes and what it takes to make a church may also be approached along the same line. If we are to find out why Pope Pius XI was moved, in the year 1928, to tell the Christian world that Rome would consider no proposition for Christian unity, except an unconditioned return of all Christian bodies, out of communion with Rome, to the Roman communion, and why assembled non-Roman Christianity at Lausanne broke down and broke apart just on the matter of orders, we may well inquire just why orders are so important. We cannot answer that question without considering the bearing of Orders upon the Sacrament, which is still to come. We can at least begin.

Many things besides the sanctity of its orders conspire to make a church imperially minded. Pride is, unhappily, not wholly alien to ecclesiastical power. The sense of immemorial administration strengthens the unwillingness to surrender any position militantly held across the centuries, or to yield to those who may long have been its adversaries. We are always more deeply established in any contention if we have held it by virtue of much argument, and often the more strongly if we have some disquieting sense of the insufficiency of our argument. There are devious ways of the human heart inside as well as outside the Church. Controversies which, in one form or another, date from almost the beginnings of Christianity, have strengthened a general Christian unwillingness to surrender any position once strongly taken.

V

The divisive question of spiritual gifts

But the matter goes deeper. For the detached student of human institutions the question of the development of the Episcopate, for example, is interesting but not vital. The bishops might be the successors of the Apostles, though it takes a deal of skating over thin ice to prove that they were. The bishop may from the first have had an order and authority of his own, or he may have grown out of the presbyter, or he may have been the local pastor magnified through circumstance and the need of a regulated and regulating ministry, which is as likely to be true as anything else. The real question is, Has or has he not some gift to give which no one but a bishop can give, without which something will be wanting in the administration of the Church's sacraments, and her mystic authority as the Body of Christ to break the bread with hands which make it the broken Body of Jesus Christ?

The inherited mind about "orders" is the key to profound divisions

If any great section of the Church should finally come to think that so, the really important thing would be their thinking it so. The testimony by which they themselves were convinced might not convince their opponents—which is, as a matter of fact, exactly the situation to-day. But that is immaterial. After a thing once gets lodged in the mind of the Church, the steps which lead up to it may thereafter, for practical purposes, be dismissed. Of course, if you want to create a new mind through new and possibly more accurate understandings, that also is another matter. Then every shred of evidence counts, and an impartial historical judgment becomes of the very greatest value.

But the mind of the Church about its bishops and popes did not grow in that way at all. After they were bishops and they were looked up to and believed essential to the Church, it was easy enough, in an uncritical age, to find some evidence that there had been bishops as long as anybody could remember—

which was entirely true—or some authoritative statement that a true church was impossible without them.

If it were possible to separate the plainly historic in the development of Church administration and office, from the mystical sense of a Divine power controlling the administration and operating through the office, everything would become much simpler; but what is most significant would be left out. There is a very true sense in which a pope or a bishop, or a presbyter either, is quite as much a state of mind, as just a man furnished with a name and vestments, if he need them, and an office. Certainly by the Fourth Century the Church had invested its officials with mystic sanctity and a more than human power.

The strange position of the priest

The priest has always been a man apart. He has carried on his commerce since the dawn of religious faith with the supernatural world. He has stood on the Godward side of life, elect and alone, touching on the one side all the needs which men would bring to their God, and on the other side the supernatural or divine power which could satisfy those needs. It has always been a highly considered position, but the priest has always held it at a price. The story of the development of the priestly function and the accompanying interpretations of the priestly office is long and fascinating; the real difficulty is that you cannot put into words what really must be said to define the priest at all. His sanctity belongs to the regions of imagination and reverence. The secret of his power is at once in his own self-assertion of the unique character of his office and the willingness of those who gather about his altars to believe him possessing the power he claims to possess.

When the priest has been accepted without challenge for generations, and his priesthood is the established centre of great systems of worship, the incidental disappears. The priest does not need to maintain himself through controversy, nor do the faithful need to reassure themselves as to his sacrosanct office; he is simply there, and God is behind him, and his altars transform the gift.

VI

Christianity inherited the priestly system on the side of its Judaic descent, but all the circumstances of its earlier period, and especially its inheritance of the mind of Christ, with its interpretation of the death of Christ as the one sacrifice which made all other sacrifices vain, combined for a little to make it a priestless religion. But there is an almost unconquerable power of self-assertion in any religious conception which is deeply rooted in the instincts and ways of humanity. Christianity could not escape the priest; he changed his name, but his awesome power, after waiting a little at the threshold of Christian churches, slipped in like a shadow and took its old place behind the altar. In plain words, the Church began to discover a difference between the clergy and the laity and to invest the clergy with priestly powers.[5] All this is associated in inseparable ways with the development of sacramentarianism.

But, after all, the sacrament was only a vehicle for the exercise of the unique power of the clergy; the full definition of that power, as has been said, lies in a region in which reason has always found hard going. This conception of the unique power of the clergy was bound to reassert itself through the very situation of the early Church; but it received strong reënforcement from the hard Latin minds of Cyprian and Tertullian. Tertullian had been a lawyer before he became a theologian, which would seem to be a curious road by which to approach the vision of the significance of the priest; but the lawyer has always understood the priest better than he has understood the prophet, being a kind of priest himself in his own realm.

The contribution of Tertullian and Cyprian

He had a strong sense of the need of authority and order in an exceedingly disputatious time, and, besides, he has been taught to revere the priesthood through his loyalty to the Roman order. He immensely strengthened the ecclesias-

[5]Of course the sacerdotalist believes this difference to have existed from the very beginning of the Church and to have been divinely ordained.

tical order by investing it with divine authority, and further defended it by making the bishops the successors of the Apostles.[6] Cyprian took the same line, and thereafter there was no debate about the clergy possessing a power divinely derived and necessary to the integrity of the Church and the sacraments.

The Church believed itself a Spirit guided body from the first

But there is another line of approach to the conception of the sacrosanct authority of the clergy, upon which the Church built so vast a structure, about which bitter controversies have so long raged, over which the Church has been so fatally divided. The Church believed itself from the first to be a Spirit-filled and Spirit-guided fellowship. The difference between a Christian and non-Christian seemed, in the early period which Acts records, to depend on whether or no he possessed this gift of the Spirit.

There was an especial induement for the Apostolic group, but the gift of the Holy Ghost does not seem to have been confined to the Apostles alone. It was given to Cornelius and his household through Peter's preaching and, in other instances, through the laying on of the Apostles' hands, as, for example, in a church in Samaria. Its possession carried with it some unusual power. In the very early accounts of the Apostolic Church no church seems completely furnished without it.

The particular phenomena of excitement, tongue-speaking and wonder-working, which attended the beginnings of the Church and were accepted as evidences of the gift of the Spirit simply fade out as time goes on. The Fathers of the Church had their explanation. There was, they said, a time when the power to work miracles was no longer necessary to the life of the Church, and therefore it was withdrawn. The religious psychologists, familiar with certain phenomena which have always accompanied religious excitement, offer their own explanation. The Apostle Paul makes another list of more permanent fruits of the Spirit. They are love, joy, peace, long

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[6]A. V. G. Allen, *Christian Institutions*, p. 90; also, Tertullian, *Concerning Baptism*, p. 17.

suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, and faith, a lovely harvest always and one necessary to the Church in all ages.

The clergy became the official channels of the "Gift of the Spirit"

Now the matter which counts, as far as the making of the Church's mind is concerned, is somewhere in all these echoes of old beliefs and strange happenings. The Church believed, first of all, that a specially promised and specially given infilling of the Spirit of God was the condition of its power; a little later it believed the possession of this same Spirit to be the condition of the graces of its character. The final step was to make the clergy the keepers of the Spirit and the Sacraments the instruments of the Spirit's saving power. It had, from the first, associated this precious possession with the laying on of hands.

There is a considerable period, a hundred years say, which is quite literally the "No-Man's Land" of argumentative ecclesiastics. The records are scanty, and there is something besides which lies outside the actual organic development of the Church. It deals with meanings which are read into what facts we have, and deeper still, with different understandings and interpretations of spiritual power and reality. The profound abysm between the religions of experience and the religion of authority opens at the foot of the priest. The Church accepted, historically, an association of spiritual power with duly guaranteed office bearers, which became a tremendous element in the Church's life.

The elements which made the Church mind sacerdotal. (The term sacerdotal is modern, the reality is very old.)

No single statement of the forces which established this position is adequate. The whole mind of the men of the time, their dependence upon symbolism and their need of it, the persistence of beliefs far older than Christianity itself, the very limitations of the intellect in dealing with states and changes of the soul, the unescapable tendency to define spiritual realities in material terms, all combined to make a bishop's chair the sign of unity, the seat of authority, the source of sacramental salva-

tion—or else to make a pope the keystone of the whole Christian structure.

Once this came to be universally affirmed and accepted, everything else was a detail. The difference between a priest and a pope is negligible, compared with what separates the priest from the communicant to whom he gives the wafer, or the penitent to whom he gives absolution.

VII

The bishop the first keystone of the clergy's gifts

During the Fourth and Fifth centuries certainly, during the Second and Third centuries possibly, the Church generally believed just this, and the bishop was the key to it all. Certain elements in the life of the Church demanded a single administration from a very early time. The tradition and actual administration of the Roman law demanded of confraternities and granted to cities a "defensor" or legal representative.[7] The Church soon had abundant need of such legal representation, though it seems to have counted only after the Empire recognized the legal status of the Church.

We do not actually find the Church either availing itself of the defensor system or much involved in it, until the Church actually begins to appeal to the State for help in its own internal difficulties and the State begins officially to interfere.[8] But for all that the bishop probably inherited this ghost of Roman power as the Church inherited so many other ghostly things from Rome. Harnack calls the bishop "along with the other clerical offices which he controlled, the backbone of the Church," and notes how the State in striking at the Church struck first at the Episcopate; if that were broken down, the Church would fall apart.

" 'If you return to the old gods,' said a heathen judge to a bishop, 'all the people will accompany you for they hang on your decision.' The bishop disclaimed so considerable a power.

[7]Dill, *Roman Society*, p. 275.

[8]Duchesne, *Early History of the Church*, pp. 356–358.

'They are ruled, not by my beck and call, but all of them by God's counsel; wherefore, let them harken to me, if I persuade them to what is right, but despise me, if I counsel what is mischievous.' "[9] But, as a matter of actual human fact, the judge was right. The bishop controlled his flock, and to the honour of the bishops generally be it said that they held bravely to the front lines through all the persecution, though now and then one of them did prudently seek some less-exposed sector.

The bishops were probably, to begin with, local pastors, though the word "pastor" cannot be used quite as we use it now, and we must understand the term "local," as I have already said, from the point of view of, perhaps, the Second Century and not our own. The local church was all the Christianity there was in any given locality. There were, undoubtedly, village bishops and countryside bishops, but the bishops of all those centres from which any kind of home missionary work was carried on, had the natural importance ministers of outstanding city churches still possess, and outlasted their less fortunate brethren.

The power of ordination was eventually denied the village and country bishops and confined to the bishops of more considerable centres. "Let them . . . never dare to ordain priest or deacon without the bishop of the town to whom they belong."[10] This finished the local bishop; the power to ordain is the keystone of the bishop's arch.

The bishop is magnified by time and circumstance

Gradually, therefore, a confluence of forces now pretty clearly recognized by all Church historians, created a centralized regional administration of the affairs of the Church and a regional administrator, the diocesan bishop with a considerable body of clergy, a great body of communicants, and increasing properties all under his control. He represented the Church in its dealings with the State, and his diocese in its relations with the Church as a whole.

He was chosen—and here is the survival of an older condition—by the people themselves, as Ambrose was chosen at

[9]Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. II, p. 57 *et seq.*
[10]Ibid., p. 100.

Milan. But, as procedure became systematized, the election was supervised by two or three neighbouring bishops—and supervision would naturally often mean pretty effectual direction. Rival factions in a town might elect two bishops, and there would be great disturbance until, through the intervention of neighbouring bishops, or the State, or death itself—a most final kind of deposition—one or the other of them was deposed.

The bishop commands the stage

Once the administration of the Church was strongly centralized the bishop became an outstanding figure—he is the centre of the picture for centuries. Whatever measure of control in Church affairs the people themselves had exercised—and that was considerable to begin with—tended constantly to diminish. The laity became less and less, the clergy became more and more. This also was inevitable. The Church of the Fourth and Fifth centuries was literally flooded by the rush of the entire pagan population into its communion. This new membership had no trained intelligence about church affairs and there was no time to train them, the Church as an organization being so driven by its own organization needs and interests as to fall sadly into arrears in the more important matter of Christian grace and knowledge. The clergy took the machinery of the Church into their own hands; the people were quite content.

VIII

The bishop then would appoint and discipline the lesser clergy, attend to the always increasing property of the Church, represent his diocese in the great councils, become the spokesman of the Church in its commerce with the State, and rule as a prince in his own principality. The time finally came when he rode out to battle with his own warriors, sat his war horse easily, and wore his armour as well as any knight.

The bishop did not immediately lose the sheer humanity which climbs with a man to any throne. Speaking with restraint, considerable unbrotherliness, understandable jealousies, militant pride of place and power, and now and then some

downright meanness are woven through the history of the Eastern Episcopate of the Fourth and Fifth centuries. But in spite of all this, the bishop had a gift to give which was beyond his wealth, his station, and his usually rather great natural force, the secret of the meaning of the office for his Church. He had the power to ordain.

The bishop was the Church's contact with God, or perhaps more truly the Divine Order. The clergy themselves were the instruments through which the Spirit of God reached the Church, and they possessed this power, as the theory of it finally developed, not by any merely human virtue of their own, but because they were properly ordained clergy of the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church. The bishop was the earthly fountainhead from whom all these blessings flowed, or at least he was until, in Latin Catholicism, he had a pope above him.

The Church safeguards its clergy

Naturally this power of ordination carried a good many things with it which are easier to understand; any church is particular about the character and qualifications of its clergy. There must be a way to guarantee the education, Christian experience, so to speak, and other qualifications of the leaders of the Church. Someone must be able to decide such questions as these and keep out the incompetent—those who would prey upon the Church instead of feeding the sheep. When grave questions of doctrine are in dispute, the orthodoxy of the clergy must be above suspicion. Now the bishop managed all this. A good deal of the mechanism through which he worked is dimly seen at best. There were at Alexandria, for example, some beginnings toward the education of the clergy—the Arian heresy began in a theological seminary in Antioch—and there must have been generally some system of instruction even though it were rudimentary. A good many of the outstanding leaders of the patristic church seem to have had no other training than the training they brought with them from the pagan schools of rhetoric, philosophy, or law.

The bishop then chose his clergy among those who seemed to be most promising, and guaranteed their orthodoxy and

mortality to the Church. Incidentally he excommunicated such of his own brethren as seemed to be failing in these important duties, or with whom for other reasons he disagreed. He was very often excommunicated by them in turn, and in such spiritual passages-at-arms the victory usually remained with the one who, for one reason or another, carried what naval strategists used to call "the heaviest weight of metal."

IX

The unity of the Church was secured then in such ways as these, and the communion of the bishops became as nearly the outward and evident sign of it as anything else. When a bishop was out of communion with his fellow bishops, he was out of communion with the Church and in a state of schism. The proper ordination of the lesser clergy was a sign that they were authoritatively placed in the clerical order of the true Church. Ordination itself, being the imposition of the bishop's hands upon the head of the candidate, was a sign to be seen and understood of all, very much as in old systems of land transfer a man passed a field in a piece of turf.

It is pretty hard to see how the Church could have been managed in any other way, considering the time and its level of intelligence, but the effect of it all was to narrow always, and often to devitalize the conception of spiritual reality. It was no longer resident in the membership of the Church, mediated through a devout life open to truth, conditioned by some living relationship with the Divine.

Spiritual reality is always hard enough to define; the period in which the Episcopate developed was hardly equal to those understandings of it which belong rather to a sensitive openness to the supreme values of life and character than to reason. The ignorance of the people with whom the Church dealt demanded a very concrete appeal, a faith set forth in things a convert could "do," with someone to assure the convert that what he did had saving power. His backgrounds of faith in magic were no hindrance to such a discipline.[11]

[11]See R. M. Wooley in his article on "Sacerdotalism" in Hastings's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.*

Spiritual power then sat on a bishop's throne and reached the Church through the touch of a hand wearing the proper signet ring. That hand on the head of a kneeling candidate for Holy Orders gave him a power to do what he could never have done through any unordained grace of spirit or perfection of character. It gave him the power to render the sacraments operative, in the fullness of time to bring the Real Presence to the chalice and the patten, to absolve with divine authority, and guarantee the faithful from birth the saving favour of God. No wonder those who possess this power proved an ancient saying: "Where the bishop is, there is the Church."

The East had no "bishop of bishops"

The East never achieved a bishop of bishops as did the West, but the heads of the churches in Antioch and Alexandria and Constantinople gained early, and kept long, a primacy due rather to the greatness of the cities from which they ruled than to any theory of the peculiar privilege of their episcopal throne. The Eastern Church called them "Patriarchs," and their various characters and incidental jealousies gave colour and interest to the history of the Eastern Church, but the future was not on their side of the world. Rome began with bishops also and for a considerable while had about the same mind concerning them the Eastern Church had for its own bishops—but the bishop of Rome was in the fateful line of destiny.

X

Many things combined to make a pope of him presently. After the division of the Empire, Rome was no longer the lonely seat of imperial administration, but Rome was still the august mistress of great memories, ruling the world through imagination and awesome suggestion, which is after all the finest kind of empire. The Roman Church inherited, besides, a great apostolic tradition, for it had the names of Peter and Paul to conjure with. It was, on the whole, fortunate in the force and single-mindedness of bishops who had genius for high administration. The Roman Episcopate inherited massive continuities of history and added thereto. An increasing

body of precedent gave to each successive bishop a vaster corporate wisdom; he ceased to be an individual; he was the voice of all the faithful, the presence of all the centuries.

The Western Church was more free from State control than the Eastern Church, being farther from Constantinople and the intrigue of the imperial court. The Western Church was never speculatively minded, but it did have a sure instinct for seizing what was central in a doctrinal controversy and a strong way of holding a position once taken. The controversies which strained the Eastern Church strengthened the Western. Rome was from the first on the side of Athanasius, contributing strongly to the triumph of trinitarian orthodoxy and profiting thereby. Rome became the court of appeal to which the East kept turning, and northern Africa also, and, since these turbulent churches supplied an abundant occasion for impartial adjudication, they really strengthened the Roman Church by their quarrels.

It is the one enduring institution in a dissolving world

The outstanding authority of the Roman Church was strongly served by its relation to the welter of Teutonic peoples, whose tides of invasion finally broke down the Western Empire and supplied the human material which was presently to become France and Italy, Germany and Britain. The Barbaric Disruption, as Henry Osborn Taylor calls it, in his fascinating study of the mediæval mind, was not so much the sudden breaking of an old order as a long redistribution of populations with slow cultural changes. It was like the invasion of the glacial ice ages before: first, a chill and a change and a slow inevitable approach, and finally the levelling of almost every ancient landmark.

The Church had found it easy from the first to extend its administration as far as the Roman eagles had victoriously gone and long remained. One may bound dominant Catholicism in Europe to-day by those frontiers within which the imperial administration of Rome was longest maintained. There were great bishoprics at Milan and Lyons by the middle of the Third Century. The North began to filter into the Empire long before it came down in flood. There was at first

power enough in the old order to assimilate these immigrants, and a growing willingness to use them in the army, in wasted fields needing new farmers, and in the machinery of the government itself. And always there was young Mother Church waiting for them, ready to take and change them and make them hers, in a way old Mother Rome, bowed beneath her years, could never do.

A new world in the making

After this long trickling of individuals across the borders, the deluge came. In the centuries which followed the Church was the one upstanding thing, in an order where every other inheritance of time was undone—the one continuing institution in chaos and change, the one unifying force through the wash of migratory populations whose kingdoms, great or small, won or lost in endless fighting were like dissolving pictures on the screen. Law and language and habits of government disappeared, old names took on new meaning, letters and culture went into eclipse. But the timeless human need of control and assurance persisted, and the Bishop of Rome took to himself the vanishing forms of old authorities and the real substance of new authorities and asserted them in the name of St. Peter.[12]

The centralization of authority in the chair of St. Peter did not take place without protest and the slow breaking down of the historic independence of great episcopates. There is, says Guignebert, no writing for the first six centuries to prove the recognition of the "mandatory right" of the papal authority. That authority grew through the confluence of many shaping circumstances and the logic of a complicated situation.[13]

XI

All this took time, and, in the actual accomplishment of it, always outran the theories afterwards advanced to explain it. Explanations always naturally come in after a thing has happened, and tend to become a veneer of defense, an arabesque

[12]Henry Osborn Taylor's treatment of this period is especially strong and clear, *The Mediæval Mind*, Vol. I.

[13]*Christianity*, p. 235.

of justification to overlay the solid substance of something already accomplished. First and last, the Church built an enormous structure of doctrinal and traditional support around the papacy, but this also is part of the structure itself. It is as if the stone and mortar of fact disappeared and the scaffolding became the tower, or else as if the tower were built, as truly it is, both of fact and dogma.

The story of the papacy is fascinating enough as a critical examination of the historical forces which took a religion from the hills of Galilee and the pleasant shore of Lake Gennesaret, and set it on the seat of the Cæsars among the seven hills of Rome and on the banks of the Tiber. But the story of the structure of supporting idealisms and traditions which was built around St. Peter's chair is more fascinating still.

St. Peter and the keys

St. Peter early became the most precious asset of the Latin Church. That Church claimed him as its founder, took to itself the reflected glory of his martyrdom and built its chief basilica over his tomb. It found in an enigmatical passage in Matthew's Gospel authority to link up the whole enormous structure of the papal Church with the deliberate purpose of Jesus. It supported its always growing prerogative with documents which made it the heir of emperors, freed its clergy from secular control, and subjected the entire Church to the Pope.

The scaffolding and the structure

It made no difference if critical historians presently discovered such documents to have no basis in fact. What the documents helped build had in reality other supports and remained unshaken. These documents were really like the scaffolding a builder uses to support his arches until the mortar is set and the keystone in place. You may take away the scaffolding after that and the very weight the arches bear consolidates their strength. By the time the Latin Catholic Church was fully developed, it was so supported by the interlocking force of all the elements which had created it as to give it a solidity not to be impaired by any critical examination of its own explanations of itself.

Then the mediæval mind, mystical and symbol-loving, in-

vested the whole structure with the glamour of its idealism, just as it idealized its cathedrals. It was now the Church rich in saints and martyrs, the keeper of the keys, victorious over all its foes, dictating its will to the world, weaving the web of its authority through all the secular life of all the states, and bringing the mighty as penitents to the feet of its popes. It clothed its power with the garments of humility. The Pope proudly wore the symbols of St. Peter's lowly craft upon his signet ring. The cardinals wore red in their pride to commemorate the blood of its martyrs. The gifts of grace flowed down from the successors of the Galilean fisherman, through all the orders of the clergy, to make bread and wine the Real Presence of God, and repeat the moving tragedy of the Cross upon every altar at every mass. If this had not happened, you would call it an impossible dream.

But all this was only a form within which the Catholic cultus made its amazing growth. When the historian has assembled all the elements which combine to create a Church in organization, administration, doctrine, he may still have missed the one essential thing; what that Church really meant to its communicants. The mind of the layman about his religion and his Church is always more revealing than the mind of the cleric. It is also far harder to discover, since the cleric tells his religious mind to the world freely and the layman is reticent. We have next to consider in what various ways the faithful of fifteen centuries lived out their lives under the shelter of the Church.

Chapter VIII

THE CHRISTIAN MIND BECOMES THE RELIGIOUS MIND OF SOCIETY

THERE is an inevitable crossing of lines in such a study of the development of Christianity as this. Material proper to this chapter has already been offered in the chapter on the Conquest of Paganism, and other aspects of Christian life which might be considered here will be taken up in the chapter on the Christian Humanitarian Mind. Christianity has always been both intensive and extensive. It has enriched and matured its spirit, extended its frontiers and perfected its organization, and all at the same time in ways impossible to dissociate.

Christianity began with the poor and unconsidered

Christianity made its first appeal to the poor and socially unconsidered with whom the world dealt harshly. These found an expectation of deliverance from its hard ways in the hope of the end of the world order. They found an inner peace in the assurance of forgiveness and redemption. They found healing comradeship in the brotherly way of Christian folk.

But the new religion soon began to appeal to the cultured, wealthy, and official classes. Such as these gave hostages to fortune immediately they became Christian disciples. They had money, position, and honour to lose for their new loyalty, and often they lost them all and their lives besides. There are particular decrees in the Third Century against senators and men of distinction and Roman knights. St. Paul salutes those of Cæsar's household. By the end of the First Century presumptive heirs to the imperial throne had been nurtured by a Christian mother. The great provincial houses had Christian members. The wealthy were generous with the Church.

Christianity and the Roman army

Christianity made its way among the Roman legions slowly. Christian soldiers found their position difficult—even perilous. The State sensed the danger of a Christian soldiery by the time of Diocletian, and his persecution was directed primarily against them. There have always been kindling parallels between the Christian life and the soldier's life. Christian hymns echo martial strains. St. Paul's imagery of the spiritual warrior armed from a spiritual armory has captivated the imagination of the centuries. But the profound contradiction between the Christian ideal and war soon asserted itself. One finds much the same situation in the Second Century as now.

"It will not be lawful," said a conscientious objector then, "for the righteous man to engage in warfare. His true warfare is righteousness itself." In an ancient case an officer in line for promotion was accused of being a Christian. The officer admitted it and was given a little time to make his decision. His bishop offered him the choice of choosing the Gospels or the sword. He took the Gospels—and was executed. Another soldier protested, on being conscripted, against the military mark: "I am a soldier of my God. . . . It is not permitted me to bear any sign upon my neck after the saving mark of my Lord." A centurion disarmed himself in front of the regimental standards of Trajan's legion. "I give up my colours," he said. "I refuse to be a soldier."[1] (But in this case the necessity of pagan sacrifice seems to have dictated his decision.)

Christianity and women

Christianity also strongly appealed to women. This brought the strain of competing religions into the home and, in a quieter way, repeated the tragedies of the court and the camp. The first outstanding thing in all this is that Christianity did grow and boasted of its growth. "We are but of yesterday," said Tertullian. "Yet we have filled all the places you frequent—cities, lodging houses, villages, townships, markets, the camp itself, the tribes, town councils, the palace, the senate, and the forum. All we have left you is your temples."[2] It de-

[1]All this from Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, Book 4, Chap. II.

[2]Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. II, p. 155.

veloped its own method of life in which one discerns all the substance of Christian character touched with steadfast devotion.[3] And it did all this a hostage to the enmity of the State.

I

A searching principle of selection

The Church of the first three centuries operated through a very searching principle of selection, a principle the Church would not have perhaps freely chosen, but terribly effective to sift the chaff from the wheat. A cause offering to those who choose it no world profit at all, and always the bitter chance of martyrdom, can at least be sure of the high courage of those who confess it, and their boundless devotion as well. The Church of the martyrs is by that test the Church of the saints. As long as the Church grew only through the confession of those who risked everything for their confession, its life was kept unspotted from the world.

When the State began to follow the emperor into the Church in a body and the Frank came up to baptism with his battle-ax red and his soul untutored, everything was changed. Mass conversion is more useful for statistical than for spiritual ends. About the beginning of the Fourth Century, people came into the Church in such numbers as to make it difficult to baptize them fast enough and the course of its history was greatly altered.

Pagan and barbarian populations react upon Christianity

Europe would need to go to the school for Church for at least eight hundred years before it was really Christian by the kindest test. During those eight hundred years, Christianity was itself strangely changed by those whom it sought to change. The Church did its best with these masses of pagan and barbarian population, but its best was poor enough. True conversion, being an affair of the soul, was left to God. The best the Church could do was to lead its candidates through certain forms, which might be trusted to produce the proper spiritual effects. Now the old

[3] Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. II, Chap. XIV.

liturgies begin to be useful and they reveal much beside the brave and simple confessions of an earlier time, combining to set the mark of the Church upon a Christian probationer. How many things older than Christianity finally combined to form the ceremony of initiation would need a most careful analysis, not possible here.

How a probationer was initiated

The candidate had first to be rid of the devil or any lesser evil spirit. There were a numerous rank of clergy who had no other business than this. Before he could become a learner (catechumen) the priest would blow in his face and sign his forehead with the cross, repeating over him a sonorous Latin prayer in which God was besought to accept him and free him from the bonds of sin. He was then given a taste of salt, which had itself been properly prayed over that it might become a perfect medicine, penetrating his bowels in the name of Jesus Christ, to save him from corruption and endue him with wisdom.

The candidate was then given required instruction usually during Lent. He was offered to the inspection of the faithful, and subjected to further rites to cast out persistent evil spirits which might be expected to fight to the last for the possession of his soul. Being now in a proper state to receive the faith, he was taught the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. A priest then performed a last exorcism commanding Satan, in strong forms of words, to forever leave the child of God now about to become God's temple through baptism and the remission of his sins. His lips and ears were then touched with saliva. He was anointed on back and breast with exorcised oil (it was no slight matter to prepare that oil) and renounced Satan with all his works.

Finally amidst light and incense and such ceremonies as he might never forget, stripped bare as a man comes into the world and goes out of it, he was thrice immersed, while he made three times his confession, once to the Father, once to the Son, once to the Holy Spirit. After that he was clothed in white garments and confirmed and took his first communion. Then the light of Easter morning fell upon him, free of Satan and

regenerate, as Dante saw the light of Easter morning when he came up from the perilous passage of the Inferno. In such ways as these a man became a Christian a thousand years ago.[4]

II

But the Church was then already old. The baptistry of the Lateran, with its columns and candlesticks of porphyry, its silver statues and golden lamb and mosaics of vines and crosses, was not built in a day. The liturgy of initiation, meticulous in detail with prayers already worn by much repetition and its dramatization of the struggle of God and Satan for a man's soul, was not made to order. It had grown through the Christian centuries with obscure rootings in older faiths and fears.

The witness of the liturgies

A liturgy may become a time-worn form, creaking like a prayer wheel as a priest drones it, or else it may be alive enough to bleed, having in it the burning sense of unseen realities, the passion of beleaguered souls, and the dramatic awesomeness of the sanctuaried meeting of God and man. The "God Lord deliver us" of the litany is either the cry of the hard-beset or merely something to be said of a Sunday, according as "the crafts and assaults of the devil" are stinging blows from an actual adversary, or simply the echo of an old time when the devil was very real. But this liturgy of the dark year 800 A. D. was alive as could be, drawing out of all the ways of the Church with life for five hundred years, and all the ways of life with mystery, fear, and faith for more years than we know.

Now what had happened to make this initiation possible? First of all, as a time frame to set it in, the organization of the Christian year, which A. V. G. Allen calls the "consecration of time." The Church inherited the Sabbath from Judaism, but changed it to the first day of the week in commemoration of the Lord's resurrection. The early Christian fellowships also carried over into the Christian Sunday the simple ways of

[4] All this account is abridged from Duchesne's *Origins of Christian Worship*, p. 295 *et seq.*

worship of the Jewish synagogue, and chiefly four elements, readings from the Scriptures, chants, homilies, and prayers.

The readings were first from the Old Testament, of course, and later, from the New Testament. The chants were from that priceless treasury of devotion, the Psalter. The homilies were expositions of the Scripture passages read, and later to become sermons. The prayers were first the free outpouring of the spirit to God and later appointed forms. The Christian Church added one thing more which finally overshadowed and interpenetrated every other aspect of worship, the sacramental administration of the Lord's Supper, but this is so significant, so central, as to need separate consideration.

The beginnings of the Christian year

The Church of the martyrs met before daybreak, for safety possibly (possibly also as the survival of an early time, when the Eucharist was the Lord's Supper, shared by the faithful Saturday night). The Sunday liturgy of the Church at rest was celebrated in the early morning. Wednesday and Friday were appointed as fast days, and the Church, having organized the week for religious uses, went on to create the Christian year. The Christian year eventually became a sort of ellipse with two foci, Easter and Christmas, but for a long time Easter was the supreme Church festival.

Easter

The Church was born in the confidence of the resurrection of its Lord. This was, for the devout, not only the assurance of His victory over death and the grave, but their own as well. Their earthly life was weary and full of peril, and, at best, a prelude to the joys of eternity. They comforted themselves with that faith in the agony of martyrdom, and wrote their confidence in rude symbols upon the living rock of their hiding places under Rome. No wonder Easter was their day of days. They approached it by penitential roads, for which they found suggestion and a time scheme for their preparation in Jesus' forty days of fasting in the wilderness.

Lent

Lent was probably an expansion of holy week, whose days were early divided among ceremonies suggested by the experience of Jesus, and enriched

with moving associations. Eventually the forty days' approach to Easter was made a discipline of fasting and penitence, as though the shadows of self-examination and self-denial and sad memory through which the Christian was led should make more bright, by contrast, the glory of the Resurrection morning. The vivid instinct of the Church for dramatization added ceremony to ceremony, until in the fullness of time nothing was omitted that would appeal to the imagination. The ecclesiastical pageantry of Lent and Easter, as managed by the Eastern and the Catholic Church is the greatest spiritual drama religion has ever achieved.

The pageantry of Christian festivals

III

Christmas begins in the West

Christmas became the second great festival of the Church. The Christian year so became, when fully developed, a series of processionals and recessionals from Christmas to Easter, from Easter to Christmas. The Eastern Church gave Easter to to the Christian world; the Roman Church, Christmas.

Dr. Allen states all this so finely as to make quotation a virtue: "The consecration of time in the Christian year was a process not completed until every day of the year was devoted to the commemoration either of some feature in the life of Christ or of some saint in the long roll of apostles or prophets, martyrs or teachers. One half of the year was occupied with the thought of Christ—from Advent till Ascension Day. The four weeks before Christmas were a preparation for the right reception of the coming of the Lord; the forty days before Easter were spent in fasting, after the analogy of Christ in the wilderness.

"A great drama was always enacting which lifted the imagination above the sordid events of ordinary life or the narrow interests of the individual, as if humanity were living in Christ, as if in His life all other lives were included. The great week before Easter set forth the events of his betrayal, His last supper with His disciples, His crucifixion, and His burial,

constituting the crisis of the drama, when Christian feeling rose to its intensity and was prepared for the transcendent act of His resurrection."

The Gospels supply no dating for the Nativity and the traditions which fixed upon December 25th are as fascinating as they are uncertain. The Church actually built its marvellous structure of liturgy and pageantry in response to the needs of its time and its worshippers, and indeed in answer to the needs of religion everywhere and always. Even the Quaker has his facing seats and the mystic makes a drama of the strife of his own divided soul.

Christianity meets the mysteries on their own grounds

Christianity was, from the first, in competition with religions whose rituals were rich in colour and action. An initiation into the mysteries of Isis or Osiris lacks nothing to impress the initiate. He fasted and sorrowed and marched in starlit and torchlit processions over flower-strewn roads, to the chanting of hymns and music of flutes.[5] He commemorated the natal days of his gods. He had his litanies, his matin, and vespers. The Christian Church could offer no less.

Why December 25th?

All this doubtless influenced the Church's calendar. The calculations by which it was decided that Jesus was born on the 25th of December are curious enough.[6] The supporting traditions were doubtful but they did point to midwinter. The Church authorities, whose critical faculty was the least of their graces, had a shrewdness to compensate. There was an old habit of the Roman populace to observe the winter solstice with unseemly festivals, and a more recent habit of the worshippers of Mithras to celebrate, on the 25th of December, a festival in honour of the sun god. The Fathers believed honestly enough that Jesus was born on the 25th. What better way was there to conquer "the unconquered sun," and turn the shame of the saturnalia to holiness, than to celebrate the Saviour's birth on

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[5]Angus, *The Mystery Religions and Christianity*, pp. 124–125.

[6]C. Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 262.

that day? From the middle of the Fourth Century the Feast of the Nativity was celebrated with rites which grew always more splendid.[7]

IV

The saints claim their days

The memory of Jesus thus ruled the Church year from two festal seats. The rest of the year came gradually to be assigned to His saints. (One half of the year, Dr. Allen thinks, was meant to be devoted to the commemoration of Christ; the other half to the life of the Church.) The Twelve Apostles came first, but the Church by no means stopped with the Twelve. The long list of martyrs whose courage unto death was the chief treasure of the Church supplied abundant material for the consecration of time. There were, besides, those who won their saintship by some incredible self-denial or shining goodness. And, if any were overlooked, there was always All Saints' Day and, for the commemoration of nameless humanity an All Souls' Day.

The making and worshipping of saints also fell in with old human ways. We want a neighbourly goodness to look up to, not too far removed from our own human estate, and our fashion of choosing our best and calling upon them in our prayers is a fault, if it be a fault, to be tenderly blamed. Every religion has its calendared saints, and some of them have won their stations at a great price. They thus became the mortal steps by which devotion mounts to the throne of God. Just as the Church exalted the human life of Jesus through the feast of the Nativity, it recognized our vast and suffering humanity in the veneration of the saints. Their days were

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[7]Dr. A. V. G. Allen finds a doctrinal significance in the late introduction of Christmas (two hundred years after Easter), and its Western origin. It represents a new sense in the Church of the value of the human life of Christ. Also the belief in the West that the Incarnation was not a progressive spiritual process but was complete in Jesus' birth. (*Christian Institutions*, pp. 470–474.) The Christian mind generally has seized happily upon all the human associations of Christmas and its influence upon art, poetry, and folk-custom is a commonplace.

checked off, one by one, in the Christian calendar, with a show of red to commemorate a more vital crimson, and the common people received them gladly.

If now and then some old divinity of the field or the hearthstone slipped in under a new name, doubtless wondering a little to find himself in such august company, it was all natural enough. All sorts and conditions of people loved the saints, for the saints had often been common folk themselves. They made pilgrimages to their shrines, and wore down the stone steps which led up to their tombs. They brought gifts to build and enrich noble churches over their ashes, and touched their relics for healing. An indulgent Church saw to it that there was no lack of relics. The people did the daily local business of their lives with the saints rather than with God, the saints having more time to attend to those who petitioned them, and being near enough to God to present the petition.

The Church with that wise, deep, human understanding which had been so largely the secret of its unfailing force, made a catechism of the practice and taught it to the devout.

Question—"Is there likewise unity between the church on earth and the church in heaven?"

Answer—"Doubtless there is by their common relation to one head, our Lord Jesus Christ, and by mutual communion with one another."

Question—"What means of communion has the church on earth with the church in heaven?"

Answer—"The prayers of faith and love. The faithful who belong to the church militant upon earth, in offering their prayers to God, call at the same time to their aid the saints who belong to the church in heaven: and these, standing on the highest steps of approach to God, by their prayers and intercessions, purify, strengthen, and offer before God the prayers of the faithful living upon earth, and, by the will of God, work graciously and beneficially upon them, either by invisible virtue or by distinct apparitions and in divers other ways."[8]

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[8]Quoted by E. W. G. Masterman in Hastings's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics;* Article: "Saints and Martyrs."

V

The Virgin Mary

There was also the worship of the Virgin Mary. I do not see how one can approach the veneration of the saints or the worship of the Virgin Mary either in a cold, hard way, or document one's study. These things belong to another region, to imagination and persistent instinct and naïve attitudes of mind. They belong also to poetry, to art, and most of all, to something in human nature which never becomes wise and grows up at all. The New Testament writers deal with the Mother of Jesus with a perfect and delicate restraint. They tell us of her perplexity over a Son whose appointed ways led Him so far from Nazareth, of the deepening shadow of sorrow which fell across her path, of her vigil before the Cross, and, in the latest Gospel of them all, of how Jesus from His Cross committed His Mother to the disciple whom He loved best. All the rest is silence.

But it was quite impossible for Mary's story to end in that way. As the Church began to read back, magnifying all those who contributed to the founding of it, and enriching what was recorded with a great growth of tradition, the Mother of Jesus was sure to be thus rescued from forgetfulness. The cult of the Virgin Mary did grow slowly. The Church Fathers speak of her now and then but only in natural connections. The worship of the Virgin grew out of the heart of the Church rather than the doctrine of the theologians, but after it had begun to flower the Church furnished the doctrine as a kind of trellis to support it.

It was a woman's cult to begin with, and Duchesne finds the first instance of it in Arabia, where it had apparently been imported from Thrace and Scythia. The celebration was simple enough, being only the offering to the Virgin Mother of certain cakes, specially prepared.[9] Only women could join in this celebration for which they had a complete liturgy. The signif-

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[9]Duchesne, *The Early History of the Church*, Vol. II, p. 492.

icant thing in this reference is the source of the cult in regions associated with the worship of the Great Mother, and the offering of the cakes, which was a very ancient way of worshipping her.

The cult of the Virgin and celibacy

One hesitates to say whether the growing adoration of the Virgin intensified the strong feeling of the Church for celibacy, or whether the monastic and ascetic tendencies in the Church, which we shall presently note, tended to exalt her worship. Very likely, there were action and interaction, but the human element in it all is most easily understood. The Western Church particularly was making a tremendously formal and legalistic affair of religion. The Roman lawyers who directed the development of the Church's polity carried the spirit of Roman imperialism not only into the Church, but up to the very throne of God. God was a kind of heavenly Cæsar, ruling from the throne of a sovereign omnipotence and administering His predeterminate decrees. He was neither near nor friendly, and the exaltation of Jesus Christ to a throne by His side removed the healing kindnesses of Galilee far from Rome. Human nature wanted a nearer and kinder way to God than all this sovereign sublimity afforded.

Besides, all this was a man's church. A woman might be a saint or a martyr, or a wealthy patron of the Church, but she was barred from the clergy. The womanhood of the Church found their representative in the Mother of Jesus, who could intercede with her Son, coming to judge the quick and the dead, as His Mother. She became the intercessor for the weak and the sorrowing, an incarnate tenderness, a revelation of the divine which no creed afforded. The chivalry of the Middle Ages naturally idealized Mary, and was in turn made more considerate of women by her cult.

The Church probably took care to save its appointed prayers from a too direct invocation of the Virgin, but the communicants of the Church were less careful, and her worship asserted itself in many popular ways. She came always to have a chapel in the cathedrals. The cathedrals themselves were most generally the churches of our Lady, especially in France. Her

image stood beside the altars, was carried in processions through the streets. The story of her life was carved over great portals, or told in many-coloured splendour in pictured windows. Art and poetry seized from the first upon so rich a theme, and the hymnology of the Middle Ages commemorated her sorrow in one of the most majestic of the Latin hymns. Her festivals were outstanding in the Christian year, and if one should take out of mediæval devotion particularly the Cult of the Virgin, he would leave it ravelled and undone.

VI

Monastic life

Then there were the monasteries, the monks, and the nuns. The Church grew as society itself grows, including within the general unity of it, great variations of temper, interest, associations. First and last, the Church before the Reformation was hospitable to almost every aspect of spiritual development, provided it remained always in obedience to the Church. Asceticism was a reaction from the earthiness of decadent Roman society (a great world weariness marked the end of the Empire), along with the passion for the salvation of one's soul, which made everything else of little account. I think an element of mysticism came into action here, and also some protest against the excessive centralization of the Church's life. It is almost as if the love of freedom, having no social way to assert itself, went off into a kind of excessive individualism which had no use for society at all.

The upper Nile valley was soon full of these fugitives from the world. They found desert and lonely places congenial to their contemplative natures. They fringed the Eastern frontiers of the Empire, populated the Arabian desert, and naturally established themselves in Palestine. They were temperamentally either the very strong or the very weak. They represented those elements in any society which easily take to extremes, or do not fit in easily with normal human ways. The bishops of the East brought them under their control as best

they could, but they were always a hard element to deal with, in Egypt especially. They had a way of swarming out of the desert in any great period of excitement, adding the fierce spirit of religious fanaticism to situations which would have been difficult without them. They became self-appointed guardians of faith and morals, with a violent passion for righteousness in other people, which reminds one very much of certain organizations in our own time.[10]

The solitaries of the East never got much beyond a loose organization. They could not farm their desert sand, and something of the fierce heat of the upper Nile valley of Arabia burned through all their ways. A modern specialist in those strange border regions, where religious excitement and abnormal mentality meet, would doubtless have found a wealth of clinical material. I do not know that anything constructive and continuing ever came from this hermit Christianity, save Jerome's translation of the Scriptures into Latin, done in the monastery ("hermit" is a misleading word here) at Bethlehem, along with a good many other things from that saintly hand far less worthy of his learning, his devotion—and his saintship.

And yet, behind this whole movement, so costly in misdirected devotion and pitiful self-scourging of strong bodies, needed to do the world's wholesome day's work, for the sake of souls that dried up in sterile austerity, there was something bigger than Simeon on his pillar or Anthony and his disordered dreams. Christianity was trying to escape a world in which sense had too long reigned supreme, and assert at any cost the values of the soul. History has always a tidal flow, flooding in in one direction, then retreating in some excess reaction. The monks of the East were the withdrawal of an element in the early Christian world from the stained worldliness, the luxury, and the moral lawlessness of the East. The pity is not in the motive but in the mistaken methods which lost in the desert sands so much that was essentially precious. But Christianity has always profited even by its mistakes.

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[10]Duchesne, *Early History of the Church*, Chap. XIV.

VII

The organization of monasticism and its strong points

The West was wiser, and under Benedict organized monasticism to make it socially creative. The monks of the early Middle Ages were pioneers, farmers, and craftsmen. They took waste lands and made of them property so desirable that shiftless kings and lords finally took them by force; they were banded together under the vows of chastity, labour, and obedience, a noble foundation for any order. Monkish chastity was a negative virtue socially, but it fed indirectly into social ideals. The monk's labour fed the poor and made his fields fruitful in an age when only the serf and the monk lived close to the land. He built cloisters and churches whose heartbreaking beauty the stupidity of succeeding ages reduced to pitiful ruin.

The monasteries were centres of peace through centuries of fighting; they preserved for us what writings of the classic world we now possess, making the manuscripts, lovingly copied and adorned in their scriptoriums, so beautiful in illumination and script that any one of them would enrich a museum. They were hospitals, charitable foundations, homes for the aged, and a safe shelter for a traveller in a lawless time. The brethren remembered the world in their prayers, and ceased not day or night to chant their Psalms and do their devotions, so lifting to God a praise which was never stilled.

The shadowed side of monastic life is plain enough—too plain. Monasteries and convents multiplied out of all proportion to their usefulness. They withdrew from the world the very kind of men and women the world needed most. They underestimated the sanctity of family life; they made chastity and celibacy one, sometimes at the cost of chastity. St. Bernard had such a power over the ardent youth of his time that fathers and mothers dreaded to have their children hear him for fear they would follow him out of the world into his gray-walled sanctuary. Discipline often grew lax, the charity of the orders was unwise, their wealth became a temptation to society and a hindrance to their own grace, but they served their time.

I should think it likely they helped society solve a good many problems which still perplex us. They were, first and last, the most successful experiments in communism so far recorded, because they supplied a motivation strong enough to hold men to the communal life. They made it possible for peculiar religious temperaments to have their own kind of religion without bothering the rest of the world. If a man thought a certain discipline, like not talking, for example, necessary for his salvation, he went off with others like-minded and lived in a non-talking community, instead of agitating for a law to impose silence on the generality of society. If monasticism weakened secular life through the withdrawal of the finely idealistic, it sheltered those who could not stand up against social strain and isolated the anti-social. Something of the same sort might be useful to-day.

VIII

In such ways as these, then, Christianity became something so changed from what it was to begin with that St. Paul would not have known how to act in St. Peter's Church—nor St. Peter either. The shadows of cathedral towers fell upon every low-built city. After the Tenth Century church bell called to church bell across the whole of Europe. The great churches were books in stone and pictured glass; the pageantry of the Christian year never ceased; men went in and out to worship before altars whose liturgies had taken to themselves elements older than Christianity and made them one with the creeds and the sacraments. The sculptured drama of the Last Judgment arched the sanctuary doors through which they passed with the awesome suggestion of the eternal issues of life.

Keeper of the keys and the gates

The Church, having the keys to heaven and to hell there pictured, added purgatory to meet the human needs and weaknesses of those it shepherded, and so stood as doorkeeper at three gates, through one or the other of which every son of Adam was bound to pass. What education there was, was the Church's business. The minds of men were fashioned a little on the old and half-forgotten simplicities of the Gospel, but much more

on the awesome drama of life, which the Church directed and interpreted.

Furnishes the calendar of time and life

There was no way to measure time save the calendar of the Church—Sunday, Saints' days, the Nativity, Lent, and Easter. There was no way to measure the hours save by shortening or lengthening shadows, the bells of matins and vespers. The labourer was called to his work and the monk to his prayers by the same sonorous music, whose thrice-repeated strokes witnessed to the mystery of the Trinity across fields and forests. The parish priest was near as birth and death; sandalled monks slipped by like shadows; somewhere high up and far away were bishops, cardinals, and popes. God was somewhere above them all, but the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ was on every altar. Mother Church dealt with all these high mysteries; a man had only to deal with Mother Church, now so old that no one could remember when she had not been.

She heard the sinner's confessions and absolved him, with a due regard for the frailty of human nature and her own discipline. She was strangely wise and sometimes strangely foolish, but in the end she forgave everything, except the denial of her own authority—that she would not forgive. Almost thirty generations—for life was shorter then—were born and lived and died within this mighty and mystical encompassing care. New languages and new states came into being; nothing remained of Roman civilization but the Latin of the liturgies and the empire of the Church. An impress was given to the Christian mind it has never since escaped.

I have left out more things than I have put in and some of them vital to the theme of this book; the whole development of Latin Catholic doctrine, for example, and of the philosophies which supported it, but I have tried to see and feel it all as the layman saw and felt it. Many of the things scholars care most about were no concern of his at all; he could not read, for one thing, and there was little to read if he could. He was a serf becoming a peasant, tied to the soil, or moved about in wars which did no more for him than ruin his fields. He was an apprenticed craftsman or a master workman, living in an old

town, making simple things laboriously and beautifully, and proud of his city. He was squire, or knight, or baron, predatory, proud, and pious, but whoever he was the Church touched every angle of his life; he saw everything through its atmosphere, as we see the stars through the atmosphere of Mother Earth.

This is, of course, an idealization of a situation which always lacked ideal elements. The supremacy of the Church was never uncontested. It dealt in hard, high-handed ways with apostasies and heresies. It is always easy to see the poetry of things down time-softened vistas; mediæval life, whether secular or religious, was not all poetry. But heresies and other forms of opposition to the Church did not generally take hold of the masses. The people remained loyal even though they did not always show any excessive respect for the clergy—on the contrary. Nor were their manners in church always seemly.[11] But society was during the Middle Ages deeply and sincerely religious.[12]

IX

All these elements, both inner and outer, did combine to create the Christian mind. They produced outlooks upon life, adjustments of values, habits of devotion, disciplines, strongly marked types of character. The Christian mind was no longer a simple understanding of the mind of Jesus, or a learned understanding of doctrine; it was a complex of manifold elements.

The Christian mind becomes a "complex" with the Church for a container

The Church became the great container. The devout were so long accustomed to obey it as to establish a habit of obedience by which the reformed churches profited. They inherited the whole complex suggestion, but the Reformers very thoroughly

[11]Guignebert, *Christianity*, pp. 317–318.

[12]The account of the building of the great churches is a proof of this if no others were offered. Henry Adams estimates the churches built in France alone from 1170 to 1270 to have represented an expenditure of a thousand million dollars in our time. (*Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*, p. 94.) And the building of these churches was often attended by lovely acts of devotion.

dissociated the cultus from the Church. The Anglican Church kept the Christian year with modification. So did the Lutheran Church, but the root and branch Reformers dismissed the Christian year with saints and the Virgin and pretty much all the interwoven and luxuriant growth of at least twelve hundred years. The vestiges of paganism went with the Reformation, though the essence of paganism, being a more stubborn growth, persisted in society to take changed forms and still remain pagan. But as long as the Reformation kept the word "church," its associations remained to touch very simple ways with an immemorial greatness and bring something of Westminster Abbey and Notre Dame to a free church conventicle. As the new churches began to have their own long history, inseparable elements of institutional pride and the sense of high possession came into action, and created the strong denominational consciousness with which Protestantism generally is now attempting to deal and finding hard going. The communions have flown their flags at their mastheads so long that they are naturally reluctant to take them down.

The Reformation and the Church idea

Christianity has, on the whole, been more strongly ecclesiasticized for the last three hundred years than at any time in its history, and many of its divisions are no longer strategic. The profound difference between the old and new Church orders was not the difference between centralized and free Church government. It was—and is—the difference between the imponderable powers of the Pope and the Latin Catholic clergy and the rationalization of Church authority. Across this abyss two entirely different conceptions of the Church face one another.

The difference between representative and democratic church administration is not strategic, and yet competitive passions and loyalties have organized themselves as strongly about these matters of detail as about the profounder differences. It is all due to understandable ways of human nature, but is due also to a persuasion that the Church must be made apostolic—without any absolute norm as to what is really an apostolic church. Something of this has begun to spend itself

and it has been, historically, a contributing element to the aggressiveness of Protestantism—but it has cost its price.

So has the long identification of Christianity with the Church, in which many precious things have been obscured—the mind of Jesus among them. Engaging substitutes for the essential Christian life have been too easily discovered in organization and a general concern to make the machine work. The spirit of life has not always been in the wheels; forces which should have gone to creating a Christian social order have been spent in creating church machinery. Competitive loyalties have displaced the sense of common devotion to common destiny.

But Christianity could never have been as much of the world as it has been, without the Church and the churches. If they were all dissolved to-morrow they would rise again out of spiritual necessities. The commanding idea of one inclusive Church, ample enough for every Christian need, still persists. The churches of the Reformation still believed in the Holy Catholic Church as they believed in God the Father Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ. The dear-bought ideal of an imperishable unity still binds competitive communions together. The Holy Catholic Church has been for long, and is now only a shadow, seen dimly through the dissevered elements of Christianity—but it has never been lost to sight, and Christendom treasures the hope that somewhere behind it is a power to bring these dissevered elements together.

Chapter IX

THE CHRISTIAN MIND BECOMES SACRAMENTARIAN

GREAT words are very much like the tall ships merchants used to send out laden for adventurous barter. The cargoes they brought home were strangely unlike the cargoes they sailed with. One would have to follow them from port to port through the Seven Seas to find how iron became ivory and furs suffered a sea change into silks and spices. But the ship came home—if the winds and lee shores spared her—bearing the same name she took out.

How the Christian mind has dealt with words

Words barter their cargoes of meaning from age to age, and finally reach some harbour of accepted usage with a definition those who used them first would never understand. The needs of the Christian mind have, first and last, freighted a good many words with meanings alien to their first uses. The key words of theology began a long time ago. Few of them are native to the living languages of Western civilization, and the popular understanding of them suffers for that very reason.

There is a most intimate kinship between the last hidden quality of race and the language the race itself has created, which gives to old worlds, always used by the folk who made them, a luminous certainty of meaning borrowed words can never have. The key words of Christian thinking are not folk words—perhaps they could not be; but if there were any way to retire the many-syllabled words of theology from circulation and replace them with words native to the genius of the modern world, the Christian mind would be the gainer.

The strange changes in the meaning of the word "sacrament"

No word of them all has suffered so strange a change of meaning across the millenniums as the word at the head of this chapter. It began in Roman law as a bond which the parties to a lawsuit put up, and the loser forfeited. The sum he deposited went to the State and was used for religious purposes. (A similar action now might discourage litigation and would certainly enrich the churches.) It became next a way of naming a civil suit. By some subtle change in meaning it became a way of entering into an obligation, and then, in a strong way, the military oath of allegiance.

The Latin theologians of the Second Century laid hold of it as a proper word to express the solemn obligation of Christian believers enlisting for their war. It was certainly first associated with baptism, which was the Christian's enlistment, and finally, in ways which only the mind of a far-off time could make clear, it came to stand for the great symbols through which it made manifest the mystery of saving grace. Did ever any word have so adventurous a voyage?

What it means now can best be understood through some account of the associations it has taken to itself in its long Christian usage.

I

There must, of course, be somewhere a point at which religion lays hold of life. There are a hundred definitions of religion,[1] but it is not a definition at all. It is a vast and awe-inspiring order through which God reaches to possess the soul, or the soul to find God, and somewhere, somehow, the twain must meet.

Religion may become real through faith

Protestantism, through its historic genius, makes faith the "binder" between God and man. This necessary and saving faith is not so simple as it sounds. It is partly the intellectual acceptance of the substance of the reformed creeds; it

[1]See Soper's *The Religion of Mankind*, Chap. I, for a suggestive list of these definitions.

is partly a trust through which one rests one's life and all its interests in the love and power of God, finding peace through surrender, strength in a Power not himself, and confidence to face the unknown in the persuasion that every man's life is a plan of God. This is the faith which sings through the great hymns and gives the devout the courage to lay their souls bare in prayer.

Faith so conceived is sometimes the sheer will to believe. The confessions the churches demand may or may not be easily credible, but they possess a hallowed authority and ought to be accepted by the exercise of a man's believing faculty. Let reason protest or acquiesce; it is not primarily a concern of reason at all. A faith like this has often ripened in rare graces of the spirit, though at the cost of intellectual integrity. Or else faith may venture on its own winged flight into regions toward which reason faces, but whose vaster reaches reason has no power to attain. Faith thus covers a wide field. It may be an arid intellectualism, an entire surrender of reason to authority, a working adjustment between reason and an inherited faith, a devout mysticism, or a daring adventure, but it needs neither priests nor altars, nor any sensible symbols.[2]

No religion has ever been able to reach and hold its followers unless they met it with their faith. No religion ever will be able to assert its empire over the soul save through faith, unless you make it entirely subjective—some state of mind into which a man comes by auto suggestion—in which case I think it can have no long expectation of survival. Any religion assumes a range of reality beyond the power of sense to prove, and faith is always the bridge across the abyss between what sense knows

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[2]It is possible that the long and searching controversy between those who need no symbols or sense-known things for their religious support and those who do, may be put in a sentence: Religion is made real "subjectively" or "objectively"; subjectively through an inner experience, conditioned by faith in the great affirmatives of religion and ripening in character and conduct; or else, objectively through sensible forms and facts which become, for the devout, the actual instrument of saving grace. The roots of these different ways lie deep in temperament. It is not likely that they can ever be completely reconciled.

and what the soul needs. When faith is lost, the whole structure of personal religion will be dissolved,

> "and like the baseless fabric of a vision,
> Leave not a wrack behind."

Those who find a faith like this enough are rarely independent of outer aids. They need a creed or a book or the assurance of the more spiritually confident, and make their own sacraments of whatever is shot through with some gleam of Divine light and brings God near to them. But they do possess a spiritual independence, and the key to their religious life is inner and not outer.

But the generality of believers have always depended upon some support for faith beyond the winged adventure of the lonely soul or the abstract authority of a church or a creed. The most ardent sacramentarian would hardly deny that the faith of the recipient is an element in the contribution of sacramental grace; indeed he maintains just that. But he would hold the sacrament itself to possess a power beyond the believer's halting trust. If only a man have faith enough to take the sacrament, the consecrated elements will do the rest, and if he be beyond the power to receive them consciously, the wafer upon a dying man's lips will support his soul in the event and mystery of death.

The profound difference between the faith and sacramental systems

A system like this shifts the entire centre of the believer's responsibility. Salvation is no longer dependent solely upon an efficient faith with all its marginal uncertainties. All that agony about salvation, which has lain like a shadow across great regions of the spiritual endeavour of Protestantism, darkening the radiance of the Christian religion and involving the most saintly in a ghastly struggle with doubt of the saving power of his faith, disappears. Arid intellectualism and formless mysticism disappear with it, and an ordered discipline takes the place of the always flooding or ebbing tides of religious emotion. One has only to accept the sacraments in the proper spirit, after proper preparation from

the proper hands, dismiss the responsibility for his soul's salvation to those divinely commissioned to attend to it, and devote himself with a quiet mind to the affairs of this world.

I do not wonder that again and again the hard beset, not temperamentally fitted for the spiritual adventure Protestantism asks of its followers, give up the struggle and find their peace in the shelter of a church which asks only to receive their obedience and puts salvation in their cupped hands with a wafer. The difference between the two systems—the sacramental and the individual-faith system—is in the profoundest abyss which divides the believing Christian world to-day, and there is at present no sign at all of its being bridged. Through what forces and in what ways has it all come to pass?

II

The beginnings of religious ceremonial are lost in time and unrecorded habit

The specialists in that most fascinating region, the origins of religious ceremonial, do not agree among themselves. They are only sure that ceremonies are as old as religion. Whether religion created the ceremonial or ceremonial the religion, is a nice point of debate between them. Those who trace religions back to beginnings older than any memory, find it rooted in the mystery of existence and man's loneliness in a wilderness world, full of fears and riddles. Religion, these say, is man's endeavour to build a spiritual home for himself, denying the fearsome, unfeeling world about him and creating a new order akin to his own questing spirit and kind to its needs. Directly he began to describe this order, alien to his world, he began to use symbols. For even words themselves are symbols and most of all those words in which the unseen, the unsensed is described.

Any hymn book is a better proof of this than pages of argument. I open mine anywhere, and this is what I see: "Blessed river of Salvation, Pursue thy onward way," "Light of the world, we hail thee, Flushing the eastern skies," "When thy soldiers take their swords," " 'Tis the spring of souls to-

day," "Bread of our souls whereon we feed." What are all these but symbols, in which what is freest from the taint of the clay and most akin to the struggles and raptures of the soul is subdued to the uses of the spirit forever striving to express in words what words can never express?

If we should discard, as Emerson did, every formal sacrament of the Church, we must still use the sacrament of words, unless we fall into the silence of the Indian fakir—and then there still remains the sacrament of silence.[3] As soon as the devout of the dark and the dawn began to venture any intercourse with their gods, they had no choice but some symbolism of worship. I do not know how old the bowed head, or the uplifted arms, or the closed eyes, or the bended knee of prayer really are, but they must be very old indeed—outer symbols of an inner attitude. And to put an enormous process of development in a sentence: All old religions have associated themselves with a wealth of symbols and forms, and most religions have made the altar and its attendant sacrifices their supreme symbol.

The altar and the sacrifice the supreme religious symbol

If the story of the altar could be understandingly written, it would be the most wonderful story in the world. The story of the throne would be colourless beside it, and the "poor kings and queens of time," who sat upon them only shadows

> ". . . gone
> Where shadows go after the sun goes down."

The strange ancestry of the Christian altar

An altar to-day in any Christian church which has an altar is clean and white and candle-lit, but behind these clean, white, shining altars, rank upon rank, are older altars roofed and unroofed, stone-piled and living rock and turf, murky with smoke and dripping red. How strange and how far a way faith has come—milestones these in man's quest

[3]For an interesting discussion of religion and symbolism, see Martin's *The Mystery of Religion*, Chap. III.

for God and God's quest for man! The altar has been the immemorial centre of worship because the altar is the outer and earthly seat of sacrifice, and sacrifice brings us, at last, to the taproot of Christian Sacramentarianism.

Sacrifice is now, of course, far more than a symbol. It is also the voluntary surrender of some advantage or possession extending even to death, for the sake of a person or a cause which will profit by such a surrender. In this last fine form it is the supreme expression of loyalty or love threading the fabric of life with shining threads. Such sacrifice is older than any altar. It is coeval with motherhood and fatherhood. The poet and the scientist alike discover it, far off and prophetic, in the ancient humus of life in which all growth is rooted. But the ceremonial sacrifice of religion is something else.

There is an enormous and somewhat contradictory literature on the whole subject, but, in the most inclusive way, primitive ceremonial sacrifice had three meanings at least. It was, first, a communion through which the celebrant sought to become a partaker of the Divine Nature, being himself weak and self-doubting—by offering and eating something in which the spirit of his deity dwelt. It was also a gift to buy a god's favour or appease his anger. It was an offering of something prized to honour the god. It was the prelude to a sacred meal which the deity and his worshippers shared together. It became, in a later and much richer stage of religious development, a symbol of the saving suffering of the Divine.[4] But no theory of ceremonial sacrifice can ever exhaust its meaning.

Any outstanding custom reaching across history from age to age and from land to land naturally gathers into itself many tributary customs and reflects changing ideas. The spirit of the worshipper always colours the rite. A sacrifice made in fear to-day may be made in gratitude to-morrow. How can anyone disentangle the changing phases of the spirit about the altars of the high gods, especially when every worshipper brought to the altar racial attitudes and memories old as fear and awe and

[4]An article on "Sacrifice" by E. O. Jones in Hastings's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* summarizes the outstanding theories of sacrifice and indicates the literature.

need! You might as well try to disentangle the play of light and shade across running water.

Once a symbol, or a ceremony either, is strongly established it is almost as persistent as the contour of the ancient hills. Ideas are more fluid, and a deal of the travail of history has been between forms grown old and hallowed and the changing needs of men. The altar still stands, but the interpretation of a sacrifice has changed. It has reflected finer conceptions of God and more searching understanding of man. The smoke of burning meat has changed to incense, which is offered not because it delights the senses of the Divine but because it symbolizes the fragrance of devotion.

III

The idea of sacrifice grows in ethical and spiritual meaning

The sacrifice, itself, became symbolic; some vivid representation of the tragic consequence of sin and the price of redemption. An old, old persuasion that blood is life dyed almost every altar with red. The influence of that belief has persisted; though the red is gone, our altar words and hymns still glow with crimson. The last and final sublimation of sacrifice made the altar the scene of a Divine self-immolation for the sins of men, which is really a way of feeling for the ultimate truth of all sacrifice. We ought not to quarrel too much with all the curious forms that the conception of sacrifice took to begin with, if it has led to this saving confidence.

On the human side, the channels through which God has made a way for Himself to come into the world are old and deeply worn. If sacrifice has taken a long road to reach the vision of God spending Himself for His children, and lighted strange fires on strange altars to find the road by, the journey is still to be judged by the end and not the beginning. If there are reflected lights of other altars on the Christian altar, and echoes of older prayers in Christian liturgies, and vestiges of older belief in the Christian faith, why, it is just in this way that any institution with which we humans—who have, by the

way, a good many curious survivals in us also—have to do finally perfects its age-old growth.

Christianity began without an altar

But there was a time when Christianity had no altar. This, of course, is to beg the whole question, for there are the devout and scholarly, who believe that the last thing Jesus did before He was crucified was to set up an altar and then in His own death to provide the sacrifice. This may be so, but there are many things to make it unlikely. Jesus was the least ceremonial, the least liturgical person in the world; nothing in the Sermon on the Mount, nothing in the parables, nothing in what He said about worship, demands an altar, implies an altar, or even looks altarward. He was on that side, at least, in the line of the prophets who could never see God clearly through the smoke of sacrifice, but found the smoke of sacrifice, on the contrary, a cloud between them and God.

Jesus taught a spiritual worship

Worship, Jesus said, is in spirit and truth. The sacrifices to His God are a broken and contrite spirit, the humilities and purities and poverties of the Beatitudes. The religion of Jesus, the Jew, was the synagogue religion. He may, or may not, have accepted the ritual side of Judaism, but if He did, His contact was loose, and is hinted at only through occasional visits to Jerusalem at the time of the great feasts. The temple was not for Him the seat of a splendid ritual worship. It was His Father's house, which had unfortunately fallen into the hands of those who were sadly abusing it.

I think if one were to seek a religion anywhere, utterly opposed, in all the spirit of it, to religious formalism, one would go a long way before finding anything which would more perfectly fulfill those conditions than the religion of the synoptic gospels. That religion is severely ethical but spiritually free. The religion of the Fourth Gospel is essentially mystical, but also spiritually free.

Of course, the Last Supper remains—a strategic exception; for the Christian Sacramentarian that is where it all began. It is too late to agree about the Lord's Supper now; any man's position has already determined the argument, which he

advances to maintain it. A non-liturgical Protestant is bound to explain Jesus' institution of the Supper in one way; an Anglo-Catholic or a Roman Catholic is bound to explain it another way; while deeper still are temperaments and profoundly dissimilar understandings of spiritual reality. There is no region in which our differences of opinion are more natural or more unfortunate. There is no region in which there is less justification for growing bitter over them.

The consistency of Jesus' Spirit and teaching would seem to be against the Sacramentarian interpretation of the Last Supper

But if an essential consistency is the hallmark of a great nature; if the life and ministry of Jesus are a seamless robe, woven throughout by the same texture of teaching, coloured by the same spiritual insight and assurance of God, then the entire force of Him outside and inside is against the sacramentarian interpretation of the Last Supper.

The practices of the Apostolic Church support this free interpretation of the one ceremony He left His followers. Dr. W. M. Clow has a very suggestive study of the apostolic names for the Supper in *The Church and the Sacraments*,[5] which sets out the New Testament references to it very judiciously. Names are windows through which to see many things, and these names reveal a fluid understanding of the ceremony and a rich, many-sided approach to it; they would amply repay an examination not possible here. But none of these New Testament names are sacramentarian, unless one makes them so. The Apostolic Church continues a simple tradition of the broken bread and wine, spread upon a table and not an altar, to show forth the Lord's death "till He come."

IV

The apostolic age ended; the Church went out on its great adventure to change the world and to be changed by it; old simplicities disappeared; new forms and understandings took

[5]Chap. XIII.

their place. The Church was not what it had been, nor was Christianity either, but all this is an aspect of growth and there is no way to forbid growth to bring change along with it. Of all the changes which Christianity underwent, no one is more dramatic or in some ways more outstanding than the long series of changes which made a sacramental sacrifice of the Lord's Supper.

The celebration of the Last Supper becomes central in Christian worship

No one questions the very definite organization of early Christian worship about the Lord's table. The Church soon grew soundly suspicious of such fruits of the spirit as Paul calls speaking with tongues, and equally suspicious of wandering enthusiasts claiming a special inspiration, which their words and their conduct did not always support. They substituted, therefore, the teaching of accredited leaders. Specialists assume a certain amount of preaching but there is little record of that for the first three centuries. Nothing was left to centre the Church's worship upon but the Supper. Once that became central, everything else followed in the most inevitable way.

By the middle of the Second Century the six New Testament names have disappeared not to reappear till the Reformation. The Lord's Supper has become the Eucharist, which means literally "thank-offering." In the accounts of the institution of the Supper the thanksgiving is almost parenthetical. It has now become central and symbolic. The Eucharist is the Church's service of praise. The majestic phrases of the Thrice Holy begin to echo through it, the celebration is formalized, a liturgy has begun to be built around it. The liturgical ceremony is beginning to displace old and elemental meanings, and, what is most entirely to the point, something has begun which can be invested with meanings, suggestions, and associations which mere words cannot define.

All the elements to make the Supper sacramental were either on the table, or in the suggestively open phrases of the New Testament which record the institution of it, or in the habits and associations of those who met about it. There were actually two doors through which the sacramental interpretation of the

Supper came in: one, the words of institution; the other, the need and spiritual understanding of the celebrants.

Through them something older than the table itself was reaching out to possess and transform it—their dependence upon symbolism and their inherited ways of believing that sense-known things communicate a spiritual grace. It needs an acute and self-sufficient mind to distinguish between a symbol and the reality behind it; the symbols, as we have seen, are always tending to become themselves the reality. Now the minds of the generations which were coming into the Christian Church, bringing with them old inheritances and dear customs, were neither acute nor self-sufficient. They had been used to taking the symbol for the reality; the temples they were deserting were full of bronze and marble gods and goddesses, which they had worshipped with a very vivid sense of the material beauty of Venus and Apollo, and no clear sense of the deities of Mount Olympus who were so dim and so far away. They had eaten their sacred meals in the temples of Isis and Osiris—and fed upon their god.

If some of them passed through the form to the realities behind it, the generality of them never managed to do that at all. A long process of education was needed before even the most spiritually sensitive would pass behind symbols to reality in the majestic ritual of the Church. The forces which had consistently seized and controlled and expressed religion since religion began, gradually made a place for themselves in Christianity. They did it in a finer and more ethical way; something had disappeared, which was never to appear again; the altar was no longer stained with blood; the ritual was no longer associated with the coarse satisfactions of sense, but names persisted and associations persisted.

The table becomes an altar

The Church could not wholly deny them, they came in in the very souls of the converted. The best the Church could do was to lift them to a higher level and invest them with a nobler meaning. The table did become the altar, not because it was an altar to begin with, but because religion had always had altars and needed the altar still, not only as a centre for its worship,

but, considering the time and its spiritual discipline, as an expression of its reality. But all this grew as everything else grows, and slowly. Scholars follow the development of it from century to century in exact and painstaking ways, not necessary here. They find the dawn of the altar and sacrifice conception, now in this phrase and now in that, in the writings and teachings of the Church Fathers. The Church's interpretation of its great ceremonial was bound to be influenced by doctrinal developments. The great controversies about the nature and person of Christ left their mark upon His table.

Doctrinal development influences sacraments and liturgies

As the idea of incarnation, of the Word become flesh, possessed the mind of the Church, the old phrase, "This is My Body," could easily be burdened with the suggestion of a new Incarnation repeated at every communion. The East took this line more strongly than the West, but between them the idea of a "heavenly element" added to the bread and the cup began to possess the Church. It was easy then to believe, and old understandings of ways and means through which the Divine might be received into the human reënforced this belief, that the elements fitly consecrated had a power of imparting life to the souls of men.

Ignatius uses a more significant phrase. He calls the Eucharist, "The medicine of immortality."[6] In other words, the elements, themselves, were now being invested with a mystic power—I do not say "magical," though I suppose the ignorant did think of it as a kind of magic—to change the recipient and do something to him more or less independent of his own character and his own power. This idea too had a long folk history behind it. A growing sense of sanctity attached to the whole ceremonial. Since the Lord's body was here and His blood, not a crumb or a drop must fall to the ground. The sacrament began to be associated with signs and wonders, and possessed a dangerous power to do some harm to those who

[6] I am in debt to Hugh Watt's masterly article on "The Eucharist," in Hastings's *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*, for a body of information in compact form, which only so fine a scholar could supply.

had no right to it. So Cyprian tells the story of a defaulter in whose hand the bread turned to a cinder.

V

There was naturally a borderland of uncertainty and various interpretation between what the Lord's Supper had been and what the Eucharist was now becoming. One may glean from the Fathers phrases which support many contentions, though no one of these phrases ought to be used on which to build a theory. The Fathers themselves were quite human and by no means infallible. Many of them brought vestiges of their paganism into the Christian communion, and some of them the hard, legalistic Roman mind.

But these phrases, when they are all assembled, do show a general drift. They are not exactly straws, but they are borne upon the current of something deeper and stronger than themselves, a current which was beginning to take to itself many tributaries from many sources. We have not yet come to the time when the elements are transformed into the Real Presence, but in the mind of the Eastern Church the elements are identified with the body and blood of Christ. The old liturgies now become useful; their prayers and forms of Institution and sequence of ceremony are like the various strata in a rock formation, in which the primitive is overlaid by later additions, without being wholly lost. They make it possible to reconstruct the whole process of development. Once the Church began to see in the elements upon the table the body and the blood of Christ, it was no longer a table. You cannot furnish any table with such awesome elements as that. The table was now an altar and unreservedly an altar.

The altar carried the idea of sacrifice since the dawn of religion, and Christianity had a sacrifice proper to its altar. Christ was the sacrifice. Here is something in the face of which all our searching of sources and our citation of authorities miss the mark. It was profoundly inevitable, and more than that, there was a strange sense in which it was true. All those meanings with which the Church had now long come to associate

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the Crucifixion of Jesus on a hill outside the walls of Jerusalem; all that majestic assertion of the Incarnation which found God in Jesus of Nazareth; all that profound necessity of the human spirit for some nearness of the Divine to be seen and perhaps touched; atmospheres of reverences and devotion; timeless instincts of the spirit itself—all combine to make the table an altar, Christ the sacrifice, and bow the communicant in devotion before it.

The Eucharist becomes a drama

The rest is almost a detail, but what a marvellous detail! The dramatic instinct of the Church laid hold of it and completed it in moving splendours of liturgy. Two dramas were constantly enacted before and about and upon the altar. Before the altar the believer waited while those who celebrated the communion wrought a miracle, brought God down again to earth and offered Him to outstretched hands. The communicant shared all this in his own emotions. Nothing was wanting in the appeal to faith, reverence, and adoration. When he considered all that was done for him, he was at once both strangely humble and strangely proud.

Those who sat before the the altar were like Mary and John before the Cross. Those who celebrated the Mass (for that is what it has all become now in the Western Church) had a power which only the properly ordained priests of the true Church could possess—the power, through the performance of an authoritative liturgy, combined with the mystic gifts of their own ordination, to repeat the saving tragedy of the Crucifixion and change the visible elements into the invisible reality of their Lord's body and blood. Upon the altar itself, in ways beyond the power of words to define, the unbelievable happened, and at the elevation of the Host, when all was said and done, Christ was there.

Music and lights and colours and vestments and incense were all used to heighten every impression and, last of all, to house this drama, liturgy, sacrament, Christian devotion built cathedrals which were themselves prayers in stone; furnished the altars with vessels of gold and silver, and let the light of richly pictured windows fall upon it all.

The most intimate relation of the sacramental and the sacerdotal

One does not know how to disentangle so tremendous an outcome of a process which had drawn its contributory elements from so many sources, and to see each element in a separate way, or assign each element to its own proper source. In fact, directly you try to disentangle its elements, they cease to exist. There is an endless play of action and reaction. The power properly to celebrate Mass involves the Church and the authority of the Church; the sacredness of the orders of priests and bishops, and bishops and popes. Two systems grew side by side and grew into one another, like the matted growth from two roots of ivy; one of them, the Sacramentarian, the other, the Sacerdotal. The two systems are really two aspects of sacredness; the one is the sacredness of ceremonial and the other the sacredness of those who celebrate the ceremony. Neither one came first; they grew up together, and each involves the other, demands the other.

The Mass and the authority of the Church

If you have a ceremony like the Mass with all its tremendous implications, you must have an authority and power behind it to make it true. If you are to have the unique power the Church assumed to itself you must have something in which that power becomes concretely manifest, and lays hold of the believer with a saving and authoritative force. The churches which claim the power and administer the sacraments may use either argument they please. They may claim the power because it is manifest in the sacrament; they may offer the sacrament as the only true sacrament because they alone have the power to make it such. The argument seems to go round in a circle, but it is tremendously effectual for all that, because its force is not in its logic, nor even in its supporting facts. It is in something stronger than logic and more subtle than facts.

VI

And yet this is by no means the whole of sacramentarianism. The Mass, or the Eucharist, as you choose one name or the other with all implied therein, is really the key upon which any

sacramentarian system locks up, but the Mass is not the only sacrament. The Catholic Church has six others besides. I said at the beginning of this chapter that religion needed something by which to lay hold of the lives of believers. Protestantism made faith its binding power, while the older historic communions assigned the binding power to the sacraments. The sacraments of the Roman Church, for example, are exactly the great points at which the Roman Church lays hold of its communicants, and offers them all the saving benefits of its authority.

The Latin Catholic Church actually worked out, as between the laity and the clergy, a division of grace and a division of labour. Doctrine, administration, and the communication of saving grace belonged to the clergy. It was the layman's business to accept the Church's ministrations; he had his own proper work to do and temptations and difficulties enough in the course of his mortal life. The Church undertook to become responsible for his salvation, if only he were her obedient son, and she made all this real to him by coming into his great experiences and directing and consecrating them. The system as it finally worked out was splendidly inclusive.

The sacrament of baptism

"The 'Catechism' of the Council of Trent affirms that the sacraments were chosen so as to direct, control, and strengthen the experience of the soul throughout the whole course of life—from birth to death."[7] The Church received her children into her arms through the sacrament of baptism. According to her theory, and it is a very noble theory, the children of the faithful were never aliens; they inherited the Church as their birthright. Curiously enough, baptism, while endlessly argued over for many reasons having mostly to do with the proper form of administering it, has never been so conditioned by sacerdotalism as the other sacraments. Its virtue was believed to lie in the form of words in which it was administered, and even a layman could administer baptism *in extremis*. During the Reformation the Catholic and Reformed churches found it

[7] *The Church and the Sacraments*, Chap. III.

difficult to agree upon anything, but they did agree in bitterly disliking those who taught that baptism administered in infancy needed to be repeated, with a proper confession of faith.[8]

Confirmation

Confirmation supplemented and completed the blessing received in baptism. (There is a difference of practice here between the Eastern and Western Church. The Eastern Church made a sacrament of anointing immediately after baptism.) It was a sacrament because through it the confirmed received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Confirmation was the privileged office of the properly ordained and it "ties up" with the whole sacerdotal system. It is also an epoch in the life of the believer. Through it he accepts for himself the gifts and graces secured for him through baptism. His godparents had disowned for him the world, the flesh, and the devil; he now disowns them for himself and undertakes, as far as in him lies, to live a godly and righteous and sober life. It is doubtless associated with old rites of initiation, thresholds across which youth passed to spiritual maturity and to meet the responsibilities of life. So the Church stood at that threshold with her sacrament of Confirmation, hallowing it with old forms and making it deeply impressive through its highway of making all ceremonial impressive.

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[8]This is a covering statement which needs a further analysis and much more definite documenting. The Church did not accept the general sufficiency of baptism without great differences of opinion. In Asia Minor baptism outside the Church was invalid. Cyprian strongly insisted that heretics should be rebaptized. It was claimed that, since baptism carried with it the gift of the Holy Ghost, only those who were trustees of that gift could baptize. But it was eventually maintained that this could be repaired through the laying on of hands without baptism. Harnack thinks the sacrament of confirmation grew out of this (*History of Dogma*, p. 140, note 3). The Roman Church took the more generous line. The essentials to baptism are the Holy Trinity, the believer, and the administrator, but the administrator is only the agent. "The sacraments are holy in themselves, not through men." Harnack (quoted), Vol. V, p. 45. But the Church never consistently carried this through.

In the sacrament of baptism the faith of the recipient finally became unnecessary and this prepared the way for infant baptism—to which Augustine lent his great authority. For a good summary, see H. G. Wood, Hastings's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article "Baptism"; A. V. G. Allen's *Christian Institutions* is clear and fine on this whole subject.

The sacrament of marriage

The third great epoch in the lives of normal men and women is marriage. Through this sacrament the Church undertook to save marriage from the mastery of low impulse, and to spiritualize all its relationships, making them the symbol of the mystical unity of Christ and the Church, transmuting the comradeships of sense in the comradeship of soul. Marriage thus consecrated should be indissoluble; a new unity has been created not thereafter to be broken. Perhaps, as Clow suggests, the sacrament of marriage represents the persistent belief of the Catholic Church that the married life lacks something of the perfect sacredness of the unmarried life, and that those who come into this ideally lower state need to be especially fortified against its weaknesses and, perhaps, temptations.

But the practical outcome of it all has been to invest marriage with a mystic sanctity and make the home at once the creation of the Church and the spirit of God. One may honestly recognize all the difficulties this conception faces, and the unfortunate ways in which it actually often works out, but one must recognize at the same time the enormous debt of society to this consecration of marriage. Now that it is beginning to break down, we find, to our confusion, that we have nothing exactly to take its place.

VII

The sacrament of Penance

Since life is a difficult business and the feet of its pilgrims are so entangled in manifold temptations that they often stumble and fall, there must be a way of restoring them. The sacrament of Penance did this, and the Roman doctrine (I am still in debt to Clow) required three acts or states of mind: the first, contrition, a true and purging sorrow for sin; the second, confession, to enable the soul to receive the grace of the sacrament of Penance and restore it to communion; and the last, satis-

faction, being as near righting of the wrong as the penitent can manage.

So Dante, when he began to climb, in his vision, all those ledges of the Mount of Purgatory which lead through cleansing discipline up to the peace and purity of Paradise, found three steps to mount before he began his journey, and beyond them a stone of adamant.

These three steps are the three steps of Penance and the adamant the authority of the Church. The faithful had to use these steps often enough and did not always find them easy climbing, but, once more, in those grave moments of repentance when the faithful turn from their sin to their better selves and God—always an epoch in the soul—there was the Church with the sacrament of Penance, laying hold of men again in their repentances and setting them anew in the way of life.

The sacrament of Extreme Unction

Finally, when the earthly pilgrimage was ended and the weary wayfarer about to make his last dread adventure into the unknown, being then above all in need of comfort and assurance, the Church stood by him on the threshold of death itself and speeded his journey with Extreme Unction—and supplied in the Viaticum a provision for the journey. Beyond the symbolism of these impressive rites, there is the assurance breathed into the ear of the dying and made sensible in what has been done, that he is in the care of a power beyond his own, and that the same hand which dismisses him from earth holds the keys to the eternal order into which he is now to enter.

By this system, then, the Church laid hold—and does lay hold—of the faithful at the great points of their experiences, bringing religion into authoritative contact with their lives just when it would impress them most deeply and command them most completely. It did all this through sensible means, which the communicant could feel or taste; so associating religion with very concrete things, which were themselves far more than symbols, being effective agents in the beginnings

of his spiritual life, its perfection, its discipline and renewals, and, finally, its salvation.

VIII

The unity of the system thus created

By the Twelfth and Thirteenth centuries this system had possessed and interpenetrated the entire religious life of Western Europe. It parallels, as we have already noted, the centralization of church administration, the unification of Western Christendom under Rome, the development of a clergy, rising step by step to the pope at the head of it all, and the development, also, of the theories of holy orders and apostolic successions. But you cannot separate these things any more than you can separate the distribution of strains in the interlocked integrity of foundation, arch, flying buttress, and pinacled tower in an old cathedral. There has never been before or since an entire religious order so unified or so complete.

So vast a system was bound to touch the Christian mind at every point, to determine its outlooks and understandings, and to influence the entirety of mediæval life. It controlled architecture and art. The Middle Ages were deeply under the spell of symbolism; they found it everywhere and wrought it into all their works. The liturgies themselves became symbols devised "so as to contain the major part of what was accomplished by and in Christ from the time He descended from Heaven to the time when He ascended into Heaven. In the sacrifice of the Mass all the sacrifices of the Ancient Law are represented and superseded. It may be celebrated at the third hour because then, according to Mark, Christ ascended the Cross, and at that hour also the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles in tongues of fire; or at the sixth hour when, according to Matthew, Christ was crucified; or at the ninth hour, when on the Cross He gave up His spirit."[9]

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[9]Taylor, *The Mediæval Mind*, Vol. II, p. 77.

The Church builds about the sacraments a wealth of symbolistic detail

It would be impossible to follow all this through in detail, but everything had its meaning—every vestment, every vessel upon the altar, all processional movements, standing, bowing, and kneeling, the number and order of the lights, the number and position of the celebrant group. The churches in which all this was ceaselessly carried on were symbols themselves. They were built in the form of a Cross; they faced the rising sun; and very often the apse was a little out of the main east and west line because the head of Christ fell to one side on the Cross. Everything which entered into the building had its own meaning. The lime is love; the stones are symbols of the living stones; the doors are hospitality or obedience; the pavement humility; the four walls the four virtues; the windows are the divine Scriptures; and, so to the last stone, the top of the highest tower.[10]

Results of the sacramental system.

The sacramental system contributed to a unity of culture.[11] Culture is a hard word to fasten down to facts, being quite as much an atmosphere as in anything else, but there is no question about the influence of religion upon culture. That influence is probably reciprocal, but where religion is so commanding as it was during the last great period of the Latin Catholic Church, it is as in Milton's great lines

> "A star to which, as to a fountain,
> Other stars returning, in their golden urns
> Draw light."

Culture always reaches its finest flower in the more purely immaterial regions of life, in imagination, devotion, sense of fitness, self-restraint and appreciation of values. There is no denying the influence of the sacramental system upon these attitudes of the spirit. Scholars, merchants, travellers, and artists moved freely from city to city during the Middle Ages.

[10] *The Mediæval Mind*, Vol. II, 78–82.

[11] This is Alice Gardner's suggestion in *History of Sacrament in Relation to Thought and Progress*, Chap. X.

Wherever they went, they were immediately religiously at home. They found in the churches into which they went what they had left behind them in the churches from which they had come. There were minor differences of liturgy, but the total effect was the same. The liturgies, as much as anything else, made and kept Latin alive as the scholars' language and the churches' language, long after the beginnings of modern language.

Beyond such detail as this the total atmosphere made for spiritual unity. All those intangible, imponderable things, which are the light and air of the soul and by which it is nourished, tended to give Europe a common spiritual culture which reacted upon every other cultural influence.

IX

Philosophy and education both reflected the influence of this system. As the doctrine of transubstantiation finally and completely emerged—and it was slow in taking final dogmatic form—it needed, of course, a philosophy to support it. That is a subtle matter into which to go, but the great philosophic controversy of the Middle Ages between the Realists and the Nominalists was really an endeavour to find a supporting philosophy for a kind of reality, which could neither be seen nor touched, and might exist independent of this or that particular thing, as though there might be humanity apart from all the men and women in the world. Philosophy became subtle in dealing with such subtle things, but lost aggressive freedom.

In general, the propositions which the philosophers were to prove were already given them, and they became far more adept in defending the accepted than in discovering the new. For all that one ought not to underestimate the mental acuteness of the thinkers of the Middle Ages, and somewhere high, and mystically controlling it all, was the sense of a Presence on an altar.

Finally, the sacramental produced a peculiar type of devotion, which, I suppose, one who is not born and bred in it will never entirely understand. The purely intellectual was

pushed into the background; the mystical and devotional took its place; contemplation and adoration are the altar virtues. Those for whom all was said and done found it more real than anything else in the world. They saw in Mass after Mass the pale and solemn scene on the hill outside Jerusalem daily repeated. There were the agony and the broken body and the falling crimson drops, and there was Christ Himself. Words became useless things in such a presence. Humilities and tendernesses were greatly strengthened and, through the subtle play of pyschological laws, the emotional life of the devout became so dependent upon the Mass that there are credible instances of nuns falling ill when deprived of it.

The sacraments become an instrument of discipline

Whether these are the more robust Christian virtues is an open question, but there is no denying their rare grace and beauty; at their best they nurtured many a saint not remembered in any calendared list. The sacraments became also the instruments of the Church's discipline. Its severest spiritual penalty was to deny communion; excommunication had a force difficult now to imagine. When it fell across a region, everything stopped; when it singled out an individual, he became a social exile. He was restored to communion by confession and penance and, in this way, the Church dealt with the moral life of its communicants by a kind of "case system." Every son and daughter of the Church from time to time laid his life or her life as an open book before the priest and received, in turn, such discipline as fitted the case and finally the grace of absolution.

It is interesting to note that when once this system broke down we never found anything exactly to take its place. Mass moral control by state legislation, which was the method next adopted, leaves so many things to be desired as to make one wonder whether it will always endure. Finally the sacramental system became the enabling power of the unity of the Church. They who belonged to one Church partook of one communion and were directed by one discipline. To fall out of communion with this body was to go off into another order. When the Eastern and Western churches finally separated, each ex-

communicated the other, and thereafter the gulf between them was unbridgeable. A like gulf opened between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, and later within Protestantism itself.

X

The Reformation and sacramentarianism

The sacramental system of northern Western Europe was dissolved in the far-reaching religious readjustment we call the Reformation. But even so, the Protestant mind did not escape the force and impact of it. Any great institution affects history in two ways: action and reaction. It affects, in one way, those who cherish and continue it; it affects those who deny it in another. Often the far-flung consequences of any great system are as manifest in the revolt against it, as in what it was and what it did. There is an inevitable drift in all sacramentarianism toward positions which demand correction. The reality may be lost and only the vesture of it remains. It is terribly easy for such a system to become mechanical and the repetition of the rite to become the whole of religion.[12] Precious loyalties and devotions may seize upon the sign and rest there, when they should pass behind the sign to the unseen reality, which at the best it makes but imperfectly manifest. Protestantism generally reacts against the old system for just these reasons, and it is interesting to note how the sharpest and most irreconcilable differences centred around the altar. In this essential matter neither party understood the other.

Protestantism let in an unsoftened light

Extreme Protestantism laid worship bare to an unsoftened light; it cleared away the accumulations of the centuries and began with whitewashed walls, plain glass windows, never an image anywhere, all the symbolism gone; nothing but a table and a pulpit—and the devout and the brooding spirit of God, who after all, like light, will shine through

[12]Harnack goes to the root of the whole situation: "What we nowadays understand by a 'symbol' is a thing which is not what it represents. At that time, 'symbol' denoted a thing which, in some kind of way, really is what it signifies. . . ." When a symbol becomes "a thing which is not what it represents," a door to many abuses begins to open.

any window, or, like air, come in with any open door. The Lutheran and Anglican churches never went so far in this direction as the Reformed churches, and kept a kind of middle-of-the-road position, logically rather difficult to maintain but satisfactory to their communicants.

None of the communions, of course, save the Quakers, entirely dispensed with the sacraments. Protestantism kept baptism and the Lord's Supper and invested the Lord's Supper once more with its old simple and primitive meanings. The power of it, however defined, and the ceremony, however ministered, have added a force to Protestant life never for a moment to be underestimated. Those who have shared it know its reality.

I remember a table spread in the front of the plainest of churches, with a burying ground about it and friendly fields in front of it, a table up to which the congregation passed in groups, beginning with those whose faces were lined with the writing of years and ending with their children and grandchildren. No High Mass in a great cathedral could be more richly adorned with the graces of the spirit, or communicate a more deeply felt solemnity and adoration.

Religion turns back to sacramentarianism

The real point is that religion has never been able to let go entirely of some association of the rapt experiences of the soul with some hallowed form. The last two generations have seen a turn of the tide among the Protestant churches generally. It began in the English church under the influence of Newman and his associates. It was coloured with romanticism; it was in part reaction against liberalism; it was in part released by men who were temperamentally unequal to the lonely adventures of the spirit and desperately perplexed by the challenges of science and Nineteenth Century thought generally. Some of it was pure imitation, and some of it a way of filling in a strange emptiness of the soul; and a little of it was and is, perhaps, a longing for pageantry and the desire to play a part in the great drama. But it was also a natural longing for a way of worship which had more to support it, and a warmer garmenture for a faith which had grown cold, unsheltered. (The close association between modern

sacramentarianism and the social gospel is significant. This makes religion worship and service.)

Almost every communion now reflects the movement in some way or another. The Cross has come back into churches which went long without it, and shows against many skylines. The table has, at least, taken the position of the altar; preaching has been increasingly compelled to share its empire with worship; no department of church life, from architecture to music, has been left uninfluenced by this turn of the tide toward a richer and more vital association of faith and form.[13]

XI

And something beyond all this has happened. The deeper fault of all churchly sacramentarianism is our undue limitation of its meaning. A sacrament is the outer and manifest sign of an inner and spiritual grace. Spiritual realities *are* mediated through material things. The word itself has a noble association. It was, to begin with, the Roman soldier's oath of allegiance to the Empire; it is a word of binding loyalties and vital relationships; it invests plain things with holy meaning. The sacramental elements have always been simple—bread and wine, water and oil—but they have been used to feed the hungry, quench the deepest thirst of the soul and renew the life of the spirit, and fit a man for his journey into the un-

[13]My colleague, Dr. John Mackintosh Shaw, who has read this chapter and made valuable suggestions, says that it needs a fairer recognition of the position of the sacramentarian. If I knew how to do that more completely, I would do it gladly. The majority of Christians (including the Eastern churches) have found and do find their sense of religious reality in the sacraments. And their faith has ripened in rare graces of character and beauty of devotion. It is impossible that a system so long and strongly held and proved in loyalties and devotions, should not be a true instrument of the Spirit of God. Kirsopp Lake, in his *The Stewardship of Faith,* has summed up the whole situation with a fine finality (pp. 117 *et seq.*, 171 *et seq.*). Maude Royden in *I Believe in God* has also a short but wonderfully telling chapter on Sacramentarianism (Chap. XX).

But if the non-sacramentarian (what a blundering word!) is to recognize the reality of spiritual grace the sacraments convey, the other side should recognize the reality of spiritual grace which may be found without them. This is the impasse the Church has now reached in its quest for unity, and only the future knows how it will be resolved. If we should recognize that we are dealing with tempers and inheritances instead of objective facts, we might be in the way of beginning.

known. The spirit which has taken them and transformed them and made them effectual has been everything.

The whole of life should become sacramental

Here is something capable of a vast and helpful extension. Spirit without form is the loneliest thing in the world, and form without spirit the emptiest thing in the world. Why should the whole of the material side of life go unsanctified when sanctification can work such wonders with simple elements? Life has neither wonder nor mystery nor glory nor sanctity, save as the spirit properly lays hold of gross and material things, saturates them with a higher quality of its reality, subdues them to its timeless purposes.

The spirit possesses a universal consecrating power but it must have something to consecrate. It is, perhaps, the service of all material things to supply sacramental elements for the spirit; it is the service of the spirit to make them sacred. In this our life in time and our comradeship with things are made perfect. There are seasons when there are sacraments in the treetops touched a little by some vernal hope, and in the curtains of the mist and summer rains, and the pure fall of snow. Sometimes the stars become a sacrament and sometimes running waters and meadows spread with light. Why? Because they feed the soul, breaking to us the timeless bread of beauty, pouring for us the cup of lovely suggestion, revealing to us some aspect of the spirit of God, whose time vesture they are.

Love hallows all it touches; faith finds nothing common or unclean. The soul may make a sacrament of the body, and love a sacrament of its elemental urgencies. Business should be a sacrament if carried on as it might be, and all the far-flung concerns of life are here only to become the revelation or the instrument of a higher reality. If all this centres in the Church, shining through pictured windows, and transfiguring altars which are hallowed by the memorial of a life and love which touched and transformed even a Cross, the Church, on the other hand, should be a source from which influences go out, to teach sense-entangled men to consecrate the whole of life on a vaster altar and offer it, broken in its own turn through sacrificial love, as a Real Presence of the Divine.

Chapter X

THE MYSTICAL MIND

THE Christian mind has grown, as any great corporate mind has grown, through action and reaction and always through a process of self-correction; its extremes have always been self-limiting; it has always found a way to make up its deficiencies. Where Christianity has, in any period, grown too external and is in the way of being lost in some form, it has corrected that by being recalled to the reality of the inner life; or again, the process has been exactly reversed. And yet every correction has been always along the line of something implicit in it to begin with, and the final result has been the enrichment of its life.

Mysticism the defence of the inner life against religious formalism

So with mysticism, for mysticism has been the retreat of Christianity upon the inner life when the inner life was theatened by an excess of form. It is, and has been, the reassertion of the value of experience against religious mechanics. Any assurance of God and the reality of religion through an inner joy and peace is mystical, and by such a test the mystical element in Christianity is as old as the gospels, and as universal as devout and prayerful lives.

The word itself, now much in use for a variety of reasons, may mean almost anything. Thirty years ago it was hardly in circulation. Just now it is being used with misleading vagueness. It may be used as a smoke screen to conceal a want of definition in doctrine; it may be a sheer emotionalism which does not like to be called by its proper name and puts on a more distinguished garment. It is, according to the dictionary, "the doctrine that the ultimate nature or reality, or the divine, may be known in an immediate apprehension or insight," which does not help much. A mystic would probably say that

he knows God through an inner certainty, independent of any other proof, and rest his ease in that testimony. The mystics whom we are now approaching "professed direct intercourse with the divine Spirit, and a knowledge of God and of spiritual things unattainable by the natural intellect."

I

Rufus Jones, with his rare power for simple statements, says: "Mysticism only means that the soul of man has dealings with realities of a different order than that with which the senses deal . . . The mystic insists that his experience reveals the fact that the inner self has a spiritual environment in which it lives and moves and has its being."[1] The mystic believed, then, that there is a discipline by which the soul could find its way to God through its own obedient travail, being thereafter more sure of Him than of anything else in the world.

> "Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
> In matter-moulded forms of speech."

Mysticism belongs to that totally useful family of words whose meanings are in their atmospheres and suggestions, rather than in their mathematical precision. Their meaning grows upon one gradually through long dealing with what they stand for. Mysticism needs—and has found—poets for the interpretation of it, and patient students of its hidden ways, and, above all, the testimony, much pondered over, of the mystics themselves. It is then discovered to be essentially, as Miss Underhill says, "the life of a dedicated will moving steadily in one direction toward a perfect and unbroken union with God," and this would seem to be the central quality of the religious life.

New Testament mysticism

There is no denying, then, the mystical element in all religious experience and the rich portrayal of it in the New Testament. The primitive documents are mystical just in so far as they

[1] *New studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 25.

define religion in terms of loving communion with God, and find God in love, and portray a life which, in its first-hand knowledge of God, is independent of churches and sacraments, and made possible by a fellowship with Jesus Christ. There were elements in Christianity from the very beginning, which might have given Christianity an entirely different character. It might have become merely a spiritual leaven working through society and across the ages, and existing only in the lives of men and women who found their peace through a faith in God which they learned from Jesus Christ; their example of luminous goodness in His character, and their way of living in His teaching.

Such a Christianity would have grown slowly; it would have been strangely diffused; it would never have been a hammer to beat down hostile forces, nor a sword to fight with; it would never have built cathedrals, nor become a proud and authoritative Church. It would have had few and simple creeds. But in the end it might have had a force to make society really Christian it seems in some sad way to have missed. But this is only idle guessing. As a matter of fact, considerations of doctrine and organization took precedence over the development of the inner life and the ethical development of Christianity as well; not entirely, of course, but in the main. Christianity had to secure an organization and formulate its beliefs to secure any shelter at all for the growth of the Christian graces. If it had not been called upon to meet a driving persecution which compelled organization for self-defense, it might have been far freer from machinery. If it had not been assailed by dangerously subtle religious speculations which threatened its very integrity, it might have ripened quietly in the lives of the devout.

Mysticism demanded the historic background of the Church

But all that was impossible; everything combined to make it just what it did become. Then again the quiet graces of the inner life are the flower of religion; they open slowly either in the individual or the institution. It requires a great deal of religious background to make a mystic. He is like the poet who takes

". . . old, unhappy, far-off things
And battles long ago,"

and makes a song of them, in which all the struggle and tragedy are lost and only the beauty and the music remain. How could the Church have taken the pagan crowd or the Teutonic tribe and perfected them immediately in all the rare graces of Christianity? The perfecting of the saints takes time, and you never get mysticism until the saints have long been in the way of being perfected.

At the same time some hidden stream of personal communion with God flowed on through all the welter of changing civilizations, hidden somewhere within the struggle about doctrine, concealed beneath the massive structure of a great organization. The Church on the whole was long suspicious, however, of those who sought their own religion in their own way, and especially of those who claimed an inner illumination. These movements were generally associated, as mysticism has often been, with too much emotion and too little practical wisdom. A good many of the semi-mystical heresies of the Second and Third centuries were too feverish and undisciplined to be of any use to the spiritual development of Christianity. In fact, they were positively dangerous.

II

Sacramentarianism long the main channel of Christian devotion

The Church in its main current carried the devotion and religious experiences of its communicants through the channel of sacramentarianism for almost a thousand years. Religion was made real through liturgies and sacraments, and more vitally still, the Church claimed a practical monopoly of the way to God. The Church was a door, a road, the keeper of the keys, she "that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." God was to be found in such ways as the Church made possible, and without the Church the soul was astray.

But there were from the first those who persisted in finding

their own roads; such as these made religion the lonely adventure of the soul. They sought God in solitariness and not in comradeship. Very likely some half-felt need for taking the lonely road did lie behind the Christian hermit life of the early centuries, but it would be quite untrue to call this wholly a mystical movement. It was often anything but that; these men and women were often excessive individualists who made a religious virtue of not being able to live with other people—they have been by no means alone in that. They were also world-weary and sought to free themselves from the entanglements of sense in which the dying empire was caught, by leaving the world altogether and fighting out their battles alone under the stars and the burning desert sun.

They were by no means always rich in the graces of the spirit, abounding rather in pride and violence. But they certainly did represent an effort to make the religious life supremely the concern of the unaided individual, and, though there were among them those like Simeon whose religion was an endless touching their toes on the top of a pillar, and many like Anthony who found their battle with the flesh intensified by the abnormal conditions under which they carried it on, there must have been many who found their peace in quiet meditation; their sense of God in the openness of their own souls to His brooding spirit.

The severe disciplines of the early Church

We are on safer grounds in another region. The Church often defeated its purpose by the severity of its discipline. "The sinner who sought and obtained admission to the number of the 'Penitents' had to submit to an elaborate system of humiliations and austerities. He had a special place in the Church and could only show himself clad in garments of mourning. Fasts of extreme severity were imposed upon him, together with abstention from all conjugal relations if he were married; if he were not, he was forbidden to contract marriage; if he were a soldier or an official, he was compelled to leave the service and return to private life. Never at any period of his life could he be admitted to the ranks of the clergy. Practically speaking, he was obliged, without betaking himself to the

desert, to retire to his own home and live there the life of a monk."[2]

This was a hard discipline and there were many who would not or could not bear it. Some, in this early period, postponed baptism and confession to the end of their life, hoping in the brief space of time left them to manage a reasonable godly life, and die in the hope of salvation. Others turned aside from the absolution of the Church and made their peace with God with none between Him and them, offering Him only their repentance and such satisfaction as they were able. The makings of mysticism are in such conditions as those, though not completely, for there are among us now many who make their peace with God in just such ways and do not count themselves mystics.

The Church Fathers not generally mystics

The Church Fathers, says Rufus Jones, were not mystics in the ordinary sense of the word. They were mostly interested in doctrines and organization, having on their hands the very great task of building the Church in the face of difficulties which would have beaten less resolute men. But they did not forget that, since religion is a spiritual experience, it does no good to build a church unless the church becomes the shelter for men and women who know and serve God in loving and simple ways, finding the proof of their faith in their own experience. Dr. Jones assembles many passages to prove this.

Tertullian was a Roman lawyer before his conversion and a stiff, stern man to deal with. He had a lawyer's respect for form and precedent. But he knew that the soul is the seat of religion. "I call in," he writes, "a new testimony; yea, one that is better known than all literature, more discussed than all doctrine, more public than all publications, greater than the whole man—I mean all which is man's. *Stand forth, O soul*, whether thou art a divine and eternal substance, or whether thou art the very opposite of divine, and a mortal thing . . . stand forth and give thy witness. . . . *I want thy experience*. I demand of thee the things thou bringest with thee into man, which thou knowest either from thyself, or from thy author, whoever he may

[2]Duchesne, *The Early History of the Church*, Vol. III, p. 6.

be." For "whenever the soul comes to itself . . . it speaks of God."[3]

The witness of Augustine

If we had no other testimony to the struggle of the soul to find God in this far-off and shadowed time, the Confessions of St. Augustine would be enough. We have only to read those burning pages to know how poor a word "mysticism" really is for all that spiritual travail through which the human lays hold on the divine, or how far-off and dim the voices of authority sound when a man has heard the voice of God Himself. St. Augustine has given us the one deathless phrase in which all that dismisses us to the quest for God is contained: "Thou hast made us for Thyself and we are restless till we rest in Thee."

He uncovers his soul to us phase by phase, struggle by struggle, until the final moment when, in a garden at Milan, he found the word which brought him peace and had no need to read any longer: "No further would I read; nor need I: for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as if it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away." His evil desires fled as shadows, conquered by a power beyond his own "for Thou didst cast them forth from me, Thou true and highest sweetest. Thou casteth them forth, and for them enterest in Thyself, sweeter than all pleasure, though not to flesh and blood; brighter than all light, but more hidden than all heights, . . . and my infant tongue spake freely to Thee my brightness, and my riches, and my health, the Lord my God." One may rest the case for mysticism in the Church Fathers with Augustine.

III

The rise of mystical movements

As the religious method and discipline of the Latin Church became more inclusive and more standardized, there was no direction for the devout seeking a freer region, to go but into their own souls to find there an experience which the Church could not wholly supply. By very deep necessity, every fresh

[3]Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 82.

religious movement of outstanding power in the Middle Ages was in the direction of Mysticism.

These movements began about the time the Church achieved its world supremacy and continued to gain in strength until the Reformation. The Church won its empire at a price. An empire—even a spiritual empire—demands an imperial policy. It becomes impatient of contradiction and unduly suspicious. It creates a secret police and adopts inquisitorial methods. Its administration becomes excessively standardized. It is jealous of its prestige, high in its ways, and more concerned about its policies than its humanities; and, above all, the vastness of it creates brooding lonelinesses and fosters the very longing for freer and more intimate association against which it asserts its force.

The Church fell strongly into such ways as these; its theory of ordination and spiritual grace separated the clergy from the laity to begin with, and that separation grew more deep and evident. There was far too little helpful teaching; free movements of the spirit were naturally suspected and checked, and there was much in the actual life of the Church which the more sensitive did not find consistent with an ideal Christianity. The Church claimed for itself powers too tremendous for merely human administration. It is not strange if hands holding the keys to heaven and hell prove unequal to the responsibility.

Concerning St. Francis and Dante

The consequent reactions took various lines. St. Francis left all his clothes before an astonished magistrate and went off singing to marry Lady Poverty. He recovered a little what L. P. Jacks calls "the lost radiance of the Christian religion," and for a little a light fell across the Umbrian hills which seemed to come from the far-off sources of Christianity. The Church organized this movement, if ever a song or a gleam of light can be organized, into the Franciscan order and was the richer therefor.

Dante betook himself from the shadowy wood,

"Where the straight path was lost in tangled ways"

to the most marvellous journey man's imagination has ever made, and though there is little enough of mysticism in the *Inferno,* it dawns across the terraces of purgatory and lights with a deepening splendour the stages of his celestial ascent.[4]

Peter Waldo gives his goods to the poor

Other movements were not so easy to control. Late in the Twelfth Century Peter Waldo, a merchant of Lyons, took the words of Jesus literally, sold all his goods, gave them to the poor, began to preach in workshops and at street corners "the simplicity of the Gospel message" and the character of the primitive Church.[5]

The Waldensian movement quickly attained a very considerable force and came into conflict with the Church. The pious goodness of the Waldensians was beyond debate; the "head and front of their offending" was their refusal either to recant or be silent. They suffered bitter persecution, but something of the movement lived on, sheltered in the folds of the Alps, to be rekindled by the Reformation and thereafter to suffer another long agony of persecution or exile. Milton wrote them one of his noblest sonnets, though fourteen lines of verse are a doubtful compensation for six hundred years of suffering. They are still in their Alpine valleys. They were not, as Dr. Jones says, mystics in the accepted sense of the word, but they did find their substitute for what the Church offered in their own sense of being God-led and God-supported.

Bernard Shaw's brilliant dialogue between Cauchon and Warwick in *St. Joan* goes to the root of what began with Peter Waldo, and has been in issue ever since; on the one side the authority of the State, on the other side "the protest of the individual soul against the interference of priest or peer between the private man and his God." Both democracy and the free adventure of religion are involved in a contest like that, and, in both democracy and the free adventure of religion, the

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[4]Edmund C. Gardner in *Dante and the Mystics* has made an exhaustive study of the mystic elements in the *Divine Comedy.*

[5]A good deal of what is here stated is gathered from Rufus Jones's *Studies in Mystical Religion* generally, though material gathered from many other sources is used.

individual soul has found the force needed for so demanding an enterprise in a sense of God's reality and support, which is very closely related to mysticism.

IV

Latin Catholic mysticism

The more significant developments of mysticism for a long period were within the Church itself. The Catholic Church never objected to mystics and mysticism as long as the authority of the Church was not involved. Many of the great Catholic mystics lived in blameless communion with the Church, accepting its spiritual direction through their confessors and becoming calendared saints after they were dead. Yet they kept, one suspects, some hidden region of experience into which their confessors never entered. The real trouble was with groups who began to face away from the Church's altars and sacraments and authorities, claiming the "power of the keys" for themselves.

The Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries were a twilight time. You may call it a twilight at the end of a day, or the twilight before the dawn; it was actually both. New and pregnant forces were beginning slowly to assert themselves. There was among the peoples of Western Europe a rising spirit of nationality, before which the mediæval dream of unity began to be dissolved. The endless little fightings, which had made every man's house his castle, were beginning to be superseded by the inclusive kind of fighting, which set France and England face to face for a hundred years.

The economic system began to change, attended by suffering and disorder. The great feudal lords hated the stormy municipal life of the free cities; the glory of Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges suffered a red eclipse; kings were jealous of the great barons and put them down with a high hand. The poor common folk suffered most; war desolated their little land holdings, sacked their cities, and ruined their trade. They had nowhere else to turn except to revolution or God; their futile

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attempts at revolution were cruelly put down, so they turned to God.

The Church did not exactly help them, being itself much entangled with kings and barons and pride of place and power, and needing a very great deal of money when the poor folk had no money to give. There is no need to exaggerate all this; there must have been everywhere simple priests near to the flock whom they shepherded, suffering with them in the general ruin of the time, but the Church had too much lost its nearness to a poor and suffering humanity. It began to lose its spiritual sensitiveness—and it did not understand.

In such situations the troubled always feel anew their nearness to Jesus Christ and their need of Him. He, too, had been poor and suffered; He had been hated and crucified. Who should know the sorrow of poor troubled folk better than He who had been one of them? Without very much organization or leadership, people formed themselves into sisterhoods and brotherhoods to practise the primitive Christian virtues. They adopted a half communal type of life. It was easy for them to share what they had among themselves because they had so little. They provided hospitals for the sick and the aged; took care of the sick or the insane; they carried the dead to their graves, and healed as best they could the wounds and sicknesses of a sorely wounded time. They lived partly by labour and partly by charity, being helped in Flanders by their counts, who probably recognized the essential social service they were rendering.

A religious mysticism wove itself through all this movement. Michelet tells their story in his own glowing way. The conditions which they sought to remedy were in part a by-product of the industrialism of the Low Countries. "Industry itself had created a world of miserable folk, shut up by the day's work in the shadows of a deep workshop, laborious and poor, deserving and disinherited, not even having in this world that place in the sun which a good God seems to promise to all His children. They knew only by hearsay of green fields and singing birds and the perfume of flowers. They were a race of prisoners, monks of industry, celibate because of poverty,

or, if married, more unhappy still, and suffering in the misery of their children. These poor folk, weavers for the most part, had a sore need of God. God visited them in the Thirteenth Century, illuminated their sombre dwelling places and comforted them at least with visions and with dreams. Solitary and almost savage, in the heart of the most populous cities of the world, they found their only consolation in the God whom they found in their own soul. The God of the cathedrals, the rich God of the rich and the priests, became little by little strange to them."[6]

The brethren of the Free Spirit find an old "Real Presence"

The brethren of the "Free Spirit" reacted strongly against the whole sacramental system and anticipated the Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century. "The Body of the Saviour," they said, "is found equally in all bread as in the consecrated wafer."[7] They believed themselves to be guided by an inward voice, which was surer than the truths preached in the Church. They afforded occasion to their critics by mixing up the doctrine of the common possession of all property with their own professed inability to commit any sin. The Church generally has had a sound distrust of self-advertised holiness.

Almost every transition movement has its marginal regions of foolishness and disorder, but something was growing here with which the future had to reckon. Northern Europe was more hospitable to these movements than southern Europe. Latin countries have always had their mystics, but they have rarely taken so spiritual and independent a course as the German groups.

The father of German mysticism

German mysticism found its prophet and teacher in Eckhart, who was a mystic of the mystics, and a learned man as well. He was high in the Dominican order, but St. Dominic would have found his teaching strange reading. What he taught does not here concern us save as he found a way to peace, in which God is all in all and the world nothing at all.

[6]Michelet, *Histoire de France*, Tome III, p. 7.

[7]Quoted from Jones's *Studies in Mystic Religion*, p. 208.

Time and space disappeared in his teaching; the soul and God are but two shinings of the same light. "The eye," he says, "with which I see God is the same eye with which He sees me."

The main value of all this for us is to illustrate into what rarefied regions the soul may be led when it undertakes to find God in some pure emptiness of spiritual communion, in which there is nothing except the soul and God, and the soul and God are one. The people to whom Eckhart preached could not follow his flights, but they did understand that he was somehow telling them that God was near and loving and that His grace was free.

V

The Friends of God

Such teachings as these, with other influences, created the Friends of God. The name itself is the best definition of what they were. They were not heretics. It was rather difficult to be a heretic in a church which had one Pope and one College of Cardinals in Rome, and another Pope and another College in Avignon, in a Europe which was ravished by the Black Death; but these fellowships were loyal to the Church. The secret of their religious lives was in their communion with God, the force of their religious endeavour centred upon a known comradeship with Him. Like the Franciscans, the Friends of God were and desired to remain faithful members of the Catholic Church; but they put before tradition the direct experiences of the Spirit. They believed there was a "divine spark" in every soul which, kindled into flame, would make "divine and supernatural" men and an "upper school of perfect resignation in which selfhood was slain and the Holy Spirit became teacher and guide."[8]

It is hard to make a plain story of what is actually not a movement with clear marked retaining walls, but a ferment and a leaven. The source material is diffused through old records, confessions, devout meditations, sermons. A single

[8]Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, pp. 137-138.

footnote in Rufus Jones's *Studies in Mystical Religion* (p. 246) shows what a scholar has to work through to place and identify a single figure in the dissolving moving picture of a religious phase which colours the spiritual history of Europe for three hundred years. The picture is lighted from without and within; sometimes it is lighted by martyr fires, sometimes these recitals of spiritual quest and discovery are bright with ecstasy and the splendour of the practice of the presence of God.

There are always the quiet, steadfast lights of courage and kindness. Some of the mystics were, as I have ventured to call them in another study, pilgrims of the lonely road—taking their own individual line and seeking no comradeship but the comradeship of God. Such as these became often the great saints—and occasionally the great heretics. Others of less individual force associated themselves in groups of brotherhoods, which change their names but not their essential spirit. The group tended to become estrayed from the Church through no perverse purpose, but because the lines of their spiritual developments led into regions where the Church could not officially follow them except to forbid the venture. They then had no choice but to obey the Church or follow the gleam.

Mysticism touched every front of religious speculation. Some of the groups were pantheists, finding nothing true or real anywhere but God, and maintaining "that each person may rise to a substantial union with God; that external law is abolished . . . that the final revelation of God is being made through man himself."[9]

It was easy to argue from this that a God-filled man could do no wrong since everything he did was God's doing. Spiritual freedom has always been a two-edged sword difficult to handle. St. Paul argued that out with his converts. Other mystic groups wished only to live sober and unselfish lives and to find some way of interpreting the formal doctrines of the Church in terms of their own experience.

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[9] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 189.

The simple organization of the mystic group

They lived, literally, in a sick time, and mystic fled from his scourged world to God. The names they found for themselves are homely and appealing. "Friends of God," "Brethren of the Common Life," "Brethren of the Free Spirit": they call across the years like bells. They sometimes lived in brotherhood houses; they were generally austere in morals and made a virtue of self-denial. There was authority among them, but it seems to have been the authority of goodness and learning, and the brethren were put through a proper course of instruction, beginning with knowledge and ending with experience.

The most fascinating account of this spiritual discipline is in a book which Jones calls the *Book of the Master* but which, in the translation I have found, is called the *History and Life of the Reverend Doctor John Tauler.*[10] However that may be, the history and life of the Reverend Doctor reads more like a pious tract than a dependable biography. The most important part of this engaging document is the Golden A. B. C., which a pious man—who felt after hearing the doctor preach that he was wanting both in grace and understanding—offers as profitable and needful for the amendment of life. There is an exercise for every letter of the alphabet beginning with A: "After a manly and not a childish sort, ye shall, with thorough earnestness, begin a good life." And ending with Z: "Zealously keep a reign over your will and your senses, that ye may be at peace with all that God doeth and also with all his creatures."

The Golden A. B. C.

Between A and Z the Friends of God are enjoined carefully to keep the middle path, demean themselves humbly, entirely give up their own wills, knightly and resolutely withstand the assaults of the devil, make their abode in God, receive all things which befall them with meekness, and keep themselves undefiled in soul, body, estate, and reputation.

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[10] *History and Life of Doctor John Tauler,* translated by T. C. Upham.

This is truly a golden alphabet and can be used to spell out a blessed and fruitful life.

VI

Morbid mysticism; Suso makes himself a strange shirt

The mystics did not, however, always follow so gracious and reasonable a road. They often surrendered themselves to an excess of self-examination, grew spiritually morbid, and sought the peace of their souls through the crucifixion of their bodies. Henry Suso is a classic example of this ecstatic and self-tormenting type. "He wore for a long time a hair shirt and and an iron chain until the blood ran from him so that he was obliged to leave them off. He secretly caused an undergarment to be made for him and in the undergarment he had strips of leather fixed into which one hundred and fifty nails, pointed and filed sharp, were driven, and the points of the nails were always turned toward the flesh. He had this garment made very tight and so arranged to go round him and fasten in front in order that it might fit closer to his body and the pointed nails might be driven into his flesh. In this he used to sleep at night."

He continued this exercise for about sixteen years, when a celestial messenger informed him that God required it of him no longer. He also made himself a cross of needles and nails, which he wore. And in spite of it all, or because of it all—so strange are the ways of the beleaguered soul—he had such visions as filled him with ecstasy and felt himself held in the very arms of God. But Micah could have told him two thousand years earlier that there was a plainer road to God than that. Those who seek the perfect life by the mystic, or any other way, do not commonly need to make their own crosses.

Mystics love to share their experiences with the world

The mystics generally have been quite willing to share their experiences with the world and at great length. They set out to find God quite by themselves, suffered much in their pilgrimage and found a marvellous possession at the end of it. They are thus like travellers in

strange countries, who must come home and tell their stories to the world, but, since all their travelling has been done in their own thoughts and feelings, they cannot describe it at all without writing endlessly about themselves, and their confessions tend to become garrulous and wearisome. But they write also with strange flashes of insight, with gleams that make up for what is wearisome and obscure, and, since they are always trying to tell what cannot be put into words at all, the wonder of it is that they have done so well.

They made a map of the spiritual regions through which they found their devious ways—as one might make a map of any Pilgrim's Progress—and called it the Mystic Way. And a very curious way it is; though, after all, when we have stripped it of its curious name, it is very much like the way of life itself. They have a strange genius for the minute analysis of experience and a name for every changing phase of experience; they do not always agree among themselves, though in the main they agree upon three great milestones. Some of them call these three milestones "purification." "enlightenment," and "union," with three divisions, so to speak, under each head. Others begin with negation and go on through purgation, union, and illumination.

Their differences are superficial, being mainly different ways of describing the same things. They began by denying themselves and the world of sense with all its delights and solicitations, and after that, through a generally long period of struggle, they won the victory over the insurgent desires of their own natures, and finally believed themselves to have come into perfect union with God, and perfect submission to His will so as to be "to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man." Sublimated elements of suppressed desire colour the mystics' confessions. The Song of Songs was much used by the mediæval mystics, women particularly finding its glowing expressions perfectly fitted to express their love for Christ and their union with Him. But men also found the same words useful.

The confessions of Jacob Boehme

A few books of permanent devotional value have come out of all this confused confessional literature, a good part of which is more useful to the specialist in abnormal mental conditions than to the general reader. The *Confessions of Jacob Boehme* is a little book of very great insight and value, though it must be read for the gleams and not for the murky background. "Where will you seek for God?" he asks. "Seek him in your soul, that is proceeded out of the eternal nature, the living fountain of forces wherein the divine working stands." "There is nothing that is nearer to you than Heaven, paradise and hell." "We must with the new man live to God and serve Him though it is not possible to be perfect in this world; we must continually go on and hold out; the new man is in a field where the ground is cold, bitter, sour, and void of life." "Do but fix thy trust and confidence upon the promise of Christ . . . if thou doubtest of the grace of God, thou dost sin greatly for He is always merciful . . . His arms are spread abroad day and night toward the poor sinner."[11]

"The Imitation of Christ" and the "Theologia Germanica"

The two classics are, of course, *The Theologia Germanica* and *The Imitation of Christ*. *The Imitation of Christ* distills all that was finest in the self-denials and aspirations of the monastic life into a perfect form. The influence of it has been incalculable. *The Theologia Germanica*, "which setteth forth many fair lineaments of divine Truth and sayeth very lofty and lovely things touching a perfect Life," is the plain man's book of mysticism, and has led many of its own time, and since, to the place where "there is no longer anything willed or loved but that which is good because it is good and for no other reason than it is good." Nothing, according to this meditation can shut a man away from God except his own will, which is a confidence to sustain any man in a lonely spiritual adventure. Martin Luther was strongly influenced by *The Theologia Germanica* and found in it

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[11]W. Scott Palmer, *The Confessions of Jacob Boehme*.

courage to go on when other doors to the Divine Presence were shut against him.

VII

The psychologist takes the mystic in hand

Any discussion of all the elements involved in mysticism is beyond the scope of a book like this. One could say, and say quite truly, that none of these men and women were entirely normal and many of them quite abnormal. Our clearer understandings of the strange ways of human personality under the stress of auto-suggestion lights up many an obscure experience. The mystic is always what William James calls a Twice-Born Man. He begins with a divided self, and being naturally deeply religious, he is drawn by a longing to be good, by the desire to be at peace with God, by the fear of the loss of his soul.

He is pulled away from God by sense, and self-will, and the entanglements of this world, and a proud unwillingness to surrender himself. And he is consequently involved in a tragic struggle. The very temptations he is seeking to escape return upon him reënforced by fear and imagination. All confessional literature testifies to this. John Bunyan tells the story of his own long fight in the dark night of the soul, though he calls it "Grace Abounding," as vividly as he describes the fight of Christian with Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation. After a mental and emotional conflict period the inner life is organized about a new and a higher centre; there is a great sense of release, and a flooding up of emotions of happiness and peace. All this up-surging new emotion comes so suddenly out of the subconscious as to have all the quality of illumination. So at least the pyschologist would explain it. The mystic grows through a series of crises, while more normal folk grow gradually with no sense of crisis at all, missing both the struggle and the sharp ecstasy of the victory.

The brave road of high adventure

In a very true way the three milestones on the mystic way are the milestones on any brave road of high adventure. Any cause to which we give ourselves demands that we deny ourselves for

its sake. Life does have to be purified and many things combine to its purgation; the passion of the soul, the discipline of circumstances, the severe demands of any worthy end. These do purge us of an undue concern about lesser things and undue attention to our own profit and happiness. We do find our peace in losing ourselves in something great enough to control and empower the whole of life. The artistic life, the severely ethical life, the life of scientific absorption, the life of fine human love, all have their mystic way, and their milestones are Negation, Purgation, and Union.

Most pilgrims also are fortunate if they do not stumble sadly in some dark night of the soul. Jesus Christ put it all in one supreme summons as far as Christian discipleship is concerned. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

The great question, of course, is the realness of the reality which the mystics think themselves to have found. Had they really found God, or is it all a delusion controlled by the struggle of the divided self and by auto-suggestion? Does the mystic find at the end of the road only what he told himself he was going to find when he set out, and nothing more? There is not likely to be any final agreement about this, but, for my part, I do not believe that the pyschologist says the last word about it; there are realities which escape both the scientist and the pyschologist. Experience has its own rights and, when everything is said and done, is the last court of appeal.

The emotions are valid elements in experience. We do not get all the realities through pure intellect. We may after all blanket a deal of ignorance with the term auto-suggestion. If there is a spiritual range of reality, if we are not entirely machines and there is something beyond matter and force, there may be ways of communication in the spiritual order of which God and men are a part, deeper than our knowledge. The mystic may find God and rest in that experience through a struggle the pyschologist can describe in his own terms, but the result may be real, and the mystic's testimony as dependable a proof of spiritual realities and relationships as the sun-

light streaming through the windows on the March morning in which this is written, is proof of the sun.

VIII

Mysticism in many ways prepared the ground for the Protestant Reformation, and in the general current of that movement specific instances of it are lost. The period of struggle which followed the Reformation, or more truly through which it moved, intensified the militant spirit on both sides. Men made swords of doctrines and authorities and drew blood as they cut. When the final adjustments were secured the pure and early fervour of the movement was somewhat lost. The Reformed churches were occupied for a hundred years in consolidating their position and grew spiritually cold.

Mysticism comes in again with John Wesley

Mysticism generally came back into Protestantism through the evangelical movement of the Wesleys and Whitfield. John Wesley's own story of his spiritual struggles reads strangely like a chapter from the old mystics. He, too, had his dark night of the soul and he, too, came out into a sudden light of joy and power. Significantly enough he was led into this new way by Peter Böhler, a Moravian missionary. Now the Moravians, themselves, continued the tradition of German mysticism and in these ways old influences reached over to lay hold of Wesley and continue themselves in the spiritual experiences of Methodism. The struggle of the divided soul for peace and reconciliation found a new name, but the steps in conversion are the old milestones of the mystic way. The strategy of the Methodist Church and of communions influenced by it were shaped to insure conversion; the Christian life must begin in a crisis.

Preaching was directed to secure a conviction of sin. Those under conviction were called to self-surrender to God in ways meant to intensify the struggle, and were led through many wrestlings to the assurance of salvation. Those who have been thus led into a full Christian experience, can date their rebirth much more precisely than they would be able to date

their first birth if no one told them. This method naturally led to self-evident abuses. It too often sought to secure the conviction of sin, not through the real sense of actual fault, but by focussing upon the soul the rigidities, and sometimes the terrors, of a theology which made them sinners by nature and inheritance and involved in a general condemnation, with no regard at all to what they actually were.

There is no denying the force and intensity of a religious experience thus secured, though many quieter and more gracious things have been forgotten in the securing of it. Under this influence hymns naturally became mystic, and the great hymns of the last three hundred years are the finest expression of what is timelessly true in all the preaching and all the theology of the period. The mystic is always nearly akin to the poet through his sensitiveness and his passion for some unseen truth and beauty. The mystic at his best has always forgotten the struggle and the dark night of the soul and his many strange wanderings, and borne his final testimony in simple and luminous ways.

English mystical verse

The poet does very much the same thing for all ways of life shot through with light and shadow. He finally makes a song of them and thereafter they endure. The influence of English mysticism upon English poetry, or, more truly, the way in which a certain range of poetry grows out of the inner life, would be a chapter in itself. It is difficult to read these poems with entire understanding, but one feels the meaning of them. I venture one illustration from Robert Hugh Benson and commend the reader to the *Oxford Book of Mystical English Verse* for the rest.

"Now God forbid that Faith be blind assent,
Grasping what others know; else Faith were nought
But learning, as of some far continent
Which others sought,
And carried thence, better the tale to teach,
Pebbles and shells, poor fragments of the beach.

. . . . . .

"Nay, but with Faith I sought my Lord's last night,
And found Him shining where the lamp was dim;
The shadowy altar glimmered, height on height,
A throne for Him:
Seen as through lattice work His gracious Face
Looked forth on me and filled the dark with grace.

"Nay then, if proof and tortured argument
Content thee—teach thee that the Lord is there,
Or risen again; I pray thee be content,
But leave me here
With eye unsealed by any proof of thine,
With eye unsealed to know the Lord is mine."

Such poetry as this is easy, as the electricians say, to "step down." I do not know that anyone has traced the parallel between the highly emotional revival hymns of the last seventy-five years, with their very great self-centredness and their almost jingling choruses of "He walks with me and He talks with me." "Anywhere with Jesus I would gladly go," "Oh, that will be glory for me," and the great mystic poems. One can almost duplicate great mystic verse and the songs of the sawdust trail phrase by phrase—but something high and fine is gone. The old mystic could tell many who are singing such songs now that the road through the dark night of the soul cannot be truly followed to any such dancing music as that.

IX

Mystics are often practical folk

One should note perhaps before it is too late that the mystics have been by no means dreamers. The actuality of such experiences, Dr. Jones contends, must be tested by their practical outcome in life. The mystics very often had a sure wisdom, attained in quiet ways, which put to shame the shrewdness of the more practical minded. St. Bernard was the adviser of kings, and St. Teresa was much looked to for her sound judgment.

There is an illumination of the mind through the quiet openness of it and its selfless willingness to be led by the highest motives, which gives a very sure and penetrating quality to its judgments.

The mystic at his best is finely free from the tempers and motives which make so much of our conduct shortsighted and fundamentally unwise. There is enough testimony to sober any man that among the deeply sympathetic and understanding there are ways of reaching shrewd decisions with which heady debate has very little to do. The Quakers, who have always lived on the sane and social side of mysticism, have perfected this art in a rare way. Judgments and agreements so reached seem to come out of the quiet depths of life with great power. Love, in one way and another, has always been a controlling force among the mystics, but they have known that love, unless it be fruitful in good works, is a dangerous emotion to profess, and good works unless they be rooted in love soon wither and die. Long lists of very practical charities must be credited to those who are better known for their sanctities than their philanthropies, but whose philanthropies were the fruit into which the flower of their sanctity ripened.

Mysticism and the Christian mind

Mysticism has left a deep mark on the Christian mind through both the inheritances of history and a profound kinship between the Christian mind and mysticism. One may recognize this without going so far as Evelyn Underhill and making Christanity essentially mystic. We have noted already how the Reformation absorbed a very great deal of North European mysticism, and carried off the distinctive passion and power of it in the fervour of the reform movement. Slow epochal changes in the mass quality of the human mind have recast the temperamental soil out of which mysticism grew (though Miss Underhill offers an imposing list of Nineteenth Century mystics). But, in general, education, disposition standardization, and a different range of conduct values have done their perfect—or imperfect—work. The ecstasies of the "camp meeting" and the Friends of God are alike gone. I should like to see a competent historian tell the

story of the changing phases of the human temperament and analyze the causes of the profound variations.

X

Mysticism has finally come to be held in solution very much as moisture is held in solution in the atmosphere. It is everywhere in general and hardly anywhere in particular. It has found a direct succession to pietism in the serene sanity of present-day "Friends"; it furnishes a background to many modern cults and a fascinating subject for the student of abnormal psychology. But its finest service is in another region. It softens the hard contours of the great creeds. They were not created in a purely intellectual atmosphere and were never meant to be seen through a purely intellectual atmosphere; their appeal is as largely to imagination and reverence and deep feeling, and the sense of realities beyond the power of words to tell.

Mysticism and theology

And this is theological mysticism. Our theologies more and more appeal to experience; they are interpretation rather than logic. We are feeling for the reality which lies beyond the symbol, and feeling is a surer guide than reason. The more dearly loved hymns, which have survived the successive revision of hymn books, are the richest in quality of emotion, and the sense of nearness to God, and the Christ-filled and the Christ-lost life. If the mystic elements were taken out of prayer, it would become a dull, mechanical exercise.

Mysticism and worship

Worship is reasserting its rightful place, because worship carries in its hallowed forms an appeal to the mystic sense and releases adorations and healing quietness of the soul, which are the very essence of mysticism. There are folk enough who would find the word a stumbling block and turn from the confessions of the saints, or the sermons of Tauler, as strange food for the spirit, or the mind, either, for whom music with its misereres and healing chords, and the light of pictured windows falling

upon church altars have a real meaning, though they cannot put it into words, and this also is mysticism.

I have known men in New England country parishes whose apprehension of spiritual things would have made them comrades of the mystics, and whose faces, as the sunlight fell upon them through clear windows in plain white churches, shone with an inner light deep and tender and moving. Those of the Quaker fellowship, who have won their right to sit on the "facing seats" through some long, brave quiet facing of all that life may give or ask, need no table at all with the white cloth and ancient emblems, but God is with them in silence.

Mysticism offers a meeting place for theology, philosophy, and even science. A study of the approach to God through experience and the necessities of thought, like the work of Royce generally, or Hocking either, is quietly coloured with mysticism. The doctrine of the immanence of God is so closely akin to mysticism as to become, in a single phrase, a very great deal of what the mystics have testified to in their confessions shot through with gleam and gloom.

Even science with its suggestion of some deep current of energy, out of whose transformations the whole of the material universe manifests itself, leads us back finally to sublime and penetrating undergirding forces, which are for many minds just now the mystical equivalent of the philosopher's absolute, or, with a good many things subtracted, of the psalmist's God. But there is something common to all these ways of thinking about a near, sustaining, and unfolding power—without which we are nothing and in which we may rest—which a mystic would have recognized as akin to that sense of the splendour of God in which he had lost himself only to find himself again. All poetry which is best known and best loved has in it something of the mystic element. I am not referring just now to what is particularly known as mystic poetry, but to the noble movement of any song into which light and colour and deep feeling are strongly interwoven. The beauty of a lyric is not alone in the craftsmanship of it, but in its power of suggestion and its way of finding lingering echoes, which come back from all the horizons of the soul.

Mysticism has greatly affected our feeling for nature and, in turn, has drawn many sustaining elements from nature itself. Our strong feeling for sunsets and dawns, and starlit nights, and wind-bowed meadows, and wheatfields ready for the reaper, and flowing waters, and the illimitable sea, is not in the sensuous elements thus supplied but in some saturation of them with our own spirits, finding therein friendships, and suggestions.

'. . . of something still more deeply interfused."

Mysticism and the soul

Mysticism and sacramentarianism are profoundly akin. For though I consider mysticism historically as a reaction against form, including sacraments, there has always been, in some temperaments, the most intimate relation between sacramentarianism and mysticism. A mystic is not always a sacramentarian, but a sensitive sacramentarian is always a mystic. Mysticism has, first and last, kept life unfenced on the side of the infinite. Our sciences, our philosophies, and our theologies, as far as we try to make them precise, imprison protesting qualities of the spirit which mysticism releases.

Even the most practical minded of us possess some hidden sense of living in communion with unseen realities, which is very often the final secret of whatever peace we have in the travail of life. The ways by which we enter into this sustaining sense of the reality of truth and beauty and goodness and some final perfectness are strangely akin to the mystic's way. Self is lost in something vaster. The rebellions and discontents of the spirit are purged away; and our own sense of essential unity with what we commune with is more sure than anything else.

This is really what the mystic found, though he discarded all lesser names and called it, once and for all, an affair with God.

Chapter XI

THE CHRISTIAN MIND BECOMES AN ADVENTURE IN LIBERTY: HOW IT BEGAN

How society is slow to change its mind once having made it up

It is hard to date the making of a mind and harder still to date the unmaking of it. The influences which create great common outlooks and understandings work through time, but they belong to another dimension. They do their work slowly, but once done it is equally slow in being undone. The wonder of human ways is not the quick changing of them but their patient steadfastness. It takes a deal of goading to drive our general humanity into revolt; most of our fears in this region are misplaced. We should commonly be afraid, not of changing our minds too quickly but of not changing them quickly enough, for events and forces have a curious, and often disastrous, way of overtaking fixed ideas. A revolution is most commonly a rear-end collision.

The extreme conservative has generally been the real defendant at the judgment bar of history. But it is easy to understand the conservative. Strongly established positions have almost innumerable rootholds in the general ground of our humanity. Long recollection invests any institution with sanctity; habits accommodate themselves to established forms and protest against disturbing change. Self-interest masquerades as high devotion. A man must know the ways of his own mind with dispassionate accuracy, if he is able to tell where advantageous self-interests end and costly loyalty begins. Old institutions build up their system of defense and idealization.

The poets sing for them. They are immortalized in art; their very forms become eloquent with beauty and sacrosanct not only through the touch of time but through something of

which time is only the servant—the fashion the human spirit has of attaching itself to ancient supports and penetrating the very walls of them with sensitive tendrils, until you cannot tell which is form and which is spirit, so subtly are they associated.

All this is supremely true of religion. Once the religious mind has become what the contributions of confluent centuries have combined to make it, and the recasting of it becomes the most difficult business in the world and correspondingly dangerous.

I

Dating the making of the Christian mind

Now all this belongs to something of which history is only the frame, but it is possible, in a general way, to date successive phases of the making of the Christian mind. Christianity was established in Europe beyond any power of secular interference by the beginning of the Fourth Century. A hundred years later the State was its willing instrument. By the beginning of the Sixth Century Christianity had taken the general doctrinal forms which it has since historically maintained. By the Eighth Century "the actually decisive influences which are going to establish in the practice of the time, the power of the Pope, come into play."[1] There were still opposing traditions and protesting authorities in Church and State, but the historic papacy is in sight. Four hundred years later western Europe accepted papal supremacy and kings walked cautiously before it. The Eastern and Western churches had parted decisively in the middle of the Eleventh Century.

The deep, strong rooting of Latin Catholicism

Latin Catholicism was as deeply rooted in every range and interest of life as any human institution ever has been, or probably ever will be, through the unity of the European mind, but time and the changing human mind itself undid it. The secret of all the change which divided and recast

[1]Guignebert, *Christianity*, pp. 245–247.

Western Christendom is to be sought in the dissolution of the mediæval mind, and so tremendous a change covers centuries. The dissolution of the mind which made the old Church possible began two hundred years before the Reformation; it is not ended yet, and the Reformation itself was only an outstanding dramatization of an action to which all the forces which dissolved one historical order and created another contributed.

The names given to the entire movement and the issue of it are too negative and too colourless. The Reformation was a reaction and it was a protest, but it was also positive and creative. The positive and creative aspects of it are to be found, not in its name, but in the development of the last four hundred years. It is rather hard to find any one name which does describe as adequately what Christianity became, in northern Europe generally after the middle of the Sixteenth Century, as mysticism and sacramentarianism describe subtle and richly coloured aspects of the Catholic Christian mind, or the Imperial Catholic cultus describes the inclusive lordship of the Church in the Middle Ages. I should venture to name this next phase of the Christian mind as an Adventure in Christian Liberty, recognizing at the same time the limitations of the title.

II

The forces which wrought the change: the rise of nationalism

There is a general agreement among Protestant historians as to the forces which really produced the Reformation. There is only a marginal agreement between Catholic and Protestant historians; their differences go to the root of the whole matter. The impact of nationalism upon the dissolving unity of the mediæval order was certainly a contributing factor. Dr. J. H. Rose in his penetrating study, *Nationality in Modern History*, says: "It is well sometimes to do with the map of Europe at critical periods what a painter does with his canvas, stand away from it and view it with half-closed eyes so as to behold only the salient

features." He then proceeds to describe all of that slow sequence of old dissolution and new integration which have made the map of Europe what it is to-day, as if he were showing us a series of dissolving pictures, out of which the Europe of the Twentieth Century emerges.

Mediæval substitutes for the nation

It is a long and fascinating story. It begins with the solidity, the unity, the universality of the Roman Empire, to the august spirit of which the Church fell heir. The political unity of Europe vanished with the Empire, and the affairs of mankind became darkly local. There were centuries during which the only binding powers in the Western world were the influence of Christianity and the haunting memory of the Empire. Both the Church and the memory spent themselves in dramatic, but finally futile, efforts to continue the shadowy frontiers of the old empire, always in opposition to other living forces working toward new groupings. Europe suffered for almost a thousand years from the attempt to make the headship of the German States the imperial centre of European administration.

There is no better historic illustration than the engaging story of the Holy Roman Empire to prove that, no matter how practical we think ourselves, we are really idealists and dreamers. The emperor was elected in Germany, crowned in Rome, and administered an empire which did not exist. A prophetic nationalism had already begun to show with a militant solidity through the shadows and conventions of the Thirteenth Century. Race was beginning to assert itself, and that long association of race with soil, and the saturation of the soil itself with memories and associations and loyalties, which make a land no mere substance of earth within defended frontiers, but a substance of the spirit instead.

New languages became bonds to bind new states together. They supplied the poet with singing words, and the statesman with a vehicle of concrete appeal to the slowly deepening national consciousness of separateness and destiny. Nationalism created a new set of forces and a new set of strains as well. The architects say that "a round arch never sleeps." They

mean, I suppose, that it is constantly tending to spread beneath the weight it bears, involving all the building of which it is a part in its restless weakness.

The strain of competitive nationality

The spirit of nationality never sleeps either, though for another reason, and involves all the human structure of which it is a part in disturbances created by its restless strength. Once Europe began to feel the strain of competitive nationality, there was no longer any enduring peace.

But nationalism supplied at the same time new centres for pride and loyalty. The sense of belonging to something bigger than himself is always needed to save the individual from his petty loneliness. He finds himself again in his church or his nation or his race, and invests them with an ideal greatness in whose reflected light he sees himself ennobled. Between the end of the Empire and the rise of modern nationalism there was nothing for a man to belong to, save the Church or his feudal overlord. All the forces which combined to make a nation naturally created the national mind, and that changed everything. The implicit conflict between a Catholic Church mind and a national mind, which has been so tremendous a factor in history for four hundred years, began then—and still exists; the roots of it are deep, the issues far-reaching.

What Rose calls the dawn of the national idea was a stormy dawn and brought a stormy day with it. Now all this took place under the spacious and somewhat deceptive shelter of the ecclesiastical union of Western Christendom. History bristles with "ifs" like ship channels marked by buoys and lights; only the "ifs" of history mark the safe waters the ships of State or Church might have better used, and not the courses to be avoided. If the Church had possessed a more far-sighted understanding of what the rise of nationalism really meant, and been more sensitively hospitable to the demands of the national spirit, the religious history of the last four hundred years might need to be entirely rewritten. Or if, on the other hand, Christianity had really possessed force enough to create among competitive nations a real sense of unity in destiny, operation, and faith, the history of the last four hundred

years might be rewritten with the omission of many bloody chapters.

Both the Church and Christianity failed at a strategic point

Actually, the Church failed in that spirit of accommodation to the fact of nationality which might have saved the unity of the Church, and Christianity failed to create the sense of a spiritual unity, which might have softened the edge of hostile contacts, and secured some working brotherhood of nations. Western civilization has been caught and ground for four hundred years between the upper and nether millstones of these two failures.

The Christian mind has been profoundly modified by the demands of the nationalistic mind. There are those among us now who think the two minds utterly incompatible. They believe that Christianity will be destroyed by militant nationalism, or else militant nationalism will have to give way before the inclusive and transforming humanities of Christianity. The future must solve that problem as it can, but the Reformation as an accomplished fact was due in part to the failure of Latin Catholicism to adjust itself to nationalism.

III

The second great force which contributed to the readjustments of the Reformation was Humanism. All this is the commonplace of the historian, and there is no excuse for considering it here save as it bears upon the making of the Christian mind. Humanism, more than any other single force, dissolved the old outlooks on life, substituting therefor new outlooks and understandings of its own. The Christian mind which had been gradually taking form, gaining content for a thousand years, was profoundly unified and richly interwoven with bright and shadowed elements, but it locked up entirely, or as nearly as the mind of races and centuries can lock up, upon the eternal issues of life. For a thousand years this world had been in the thought of the devout only the threshold of heaven, hell, or purgatory. Natural reactions against the grossness of paganism had carried the Christian mind away from the

world of time and the senses, leaving countless lovely and human things behind in the change.

The mediæval religious mind saw this world only as the threshold of the next

The Christian mind had finally reacted against its first ascetic reaction, but never so as to bring it back into full kinship with the beauty of the earth, or wholesome understanding of the meanings of sense and time. The mediæval world carried on the business of life in its own strong, fine way, and there must have been some hidden wealth of true humanity in its castles and old cities with the fronts of their high-roofed houses meeting across narrow streets. But the real meanings of life were somewhere else.

The shadows of old and fearsome superstitions lay darkly across the Christian world. Men lived and died in the dread of unfriendly spirits on earth and of torment thereafter. There must have been laughter through all those centuries, but there is little laughter of the spirit in their literature, and little testimony to any appreciation of the beauty of earth and sky. St. Bernard is said to have walked all day along the shores of Lake Lucerne and to have asked at the end of the day where the lake was. He was the adviser of kings, but his vision was upward and inward.[2]

The human body was either a garment to be impatiently worn till one might put it off, or else, through its appetites, an enemy of the soul. Those sculptured figures of churchmen and crusaders which lie at length upon beds of stone in the chapels of old churches are meagre and always a little distorted, but the craftsman carved them as he saw them. The mediæval sculptor knew sometimes how to give his saints a look as though

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[2]This statement probably needs qualification. *Professor Robert Hastings Nichols* who has read this chapter, says that there was humour in mediæval student songs and an appreciation of beauty in German literature of the Middle Ages and the Latin of the Middle Ages. He also asks pointedly, "What about St. Francis?" I think the sense of the light and beauty of life to have been lost in the beginning of the Fourteenth Century and not recovered till the Renaissance. The sorrows of Europe which terminated in the "Dance of Death"—one of the strange historic hysterias—cast a dark shadow over the spirit of the late Middle Ages.

they were peering wide-eyed into the unseen, but their anatomy is a detail. Only in sculptured figures of angels, the Virgin, and now and then a Christ, like the lovely Christ at Rheims, does he make his figures beautiful. The human mind did not dare to inquire and was told what to think.

The limitations within which thought worked

Its speculations in permitted regions were acute and subtle, but they moved in a circle. The adventures of the mind, as we have seen in the study of mysticism, were all in the region of religious experience, and in the endeavour to build a ladder to God out of repentance, spiritual aspiration, and strange disciplines. There was no merely human material for the mind to exercise itself upon. Classic literature was only a dim memory, though the substantial treasures of it were preserved in the monasteries; but a monk would rub out Virgil and Cicero to get a parchment to copy some book of theology upon, and the key to Greek was generally lost to Western Europe.[3]

The mutilated treasures of Rome and Athens were buried beneath the waste of centuries of pillage and ruin; no one remembered them or sought to recover them. Painters were beginning to paint their altar pieces, but they had no subjects save the saints and the approved themes of the Church. Their models were what they thought a saint ought to look like; there is a strange pathos in their fumbling feeling after beauty, light, and colour. The dominant motif everywhere, to which all the music of life was set, was the transitoriness of life, the delusions of the world, and the awesomeness of the eternal.

IV

The light begins to dawn

By the Fourteenth Century, perhaps, all this began to change a little, as the dawn lights a long horizon. Henry Osborn Tay-

[3]Dr. Nichols adds this note: "It is coming to be recognized that the Middle Ages were not uncharacterized by intellectual initiation, that the control of the Church was never such as to make other-worldliness wholly dominant, and that the literary monuments of Latin antiquity, at least were widely known." Walker, *History*, Chap. X, p. 313.

lor says that the Thirteenth Century in western Europe was marked by the growth of the universities, the discovery and appropriation of Aristotle, and the activities of Dominicans and Franciscans.[4] All this, save St. Francis who meant exactly what light and music mean, meant, to begin with, very little more than a freer exercise of the mind in less traditional ways.

But the universities did meet a need, which, once aroused, brought young men by the thousands to the great centres of learning, and made them vagrants of learning from Italy to Oxford and Cambridge. Aristotle taught them a little to observe and ask questions. A love of life and the pure joy of living came up in music from the south with the Troubadours. They sang of chivalric love, and made a kind of art and science of it which knights and ladies found much to their mind. Old legends of King Arthur and his knights furnished them a material which poets ever since have loved to use. Edward Arlington Robinson has recently told the sad story of Tristram and Isolde—one of the favourite stories of the Troubadours—in a way to match any poet of them all.

Three great discoveries

But this music did not make humanism. It was only the prelude of something more lasting and forceful. The first phase in the revival of learning, the Renaissance, the humanistic movement, was Italy's rediscovery of Greece; the second was Italy's rediscovery of herself; and the third was northern Europe's discovery of Italy. Symonds defines humanism as a "new and vital perception of the dignity of man as a rational being apart from theological determinations, and in the further perception that classic literature alone displayed human nature in the plenitude of intellectual and moral freedom.[5]

It was really, in a shorter way, the return of the human spirit upon the interests, freedoms, the beauties, and the meaning of the world. Since classic art and literature were the materials upon which it first seized, possessing a magic power to release them, it began in those lands in which classic art and literature had mellowed in their perfect beauty.

[4] *The Mediæval Mind*, Vol. II, p. 378.

[5] Symonds, *The Revival of Learning*, p. 74 *et seq.*

A pioneer of the art of life

The fact that these were sun-drenched lands ought not to be overlooked. Mother Earth ripens a happier human harvest under blue skies than among the mists of the North. The historians agree in tracing the revival of letters and art back to Petrarch as to a source. He was born for just that task; he recaptured by instinct the grave music of Cicero's prose and treasured Greek manuscripts, though he could not read them; he assembled coins and inscriptions and was the first to preach the duty of preserving ancient monuments.[6] He made an art of life and sought a balanced perfection. He was the first in a perfect flowering of Italian genius. The lovers of letters began that search for old manuscripts which has never since ceased, and paid good golden florins to have them copied upon vellum, richly illuminated and bound in carved ivory and wood. Any manuscript was treasured—the Bible, St. Jerome's Letters, Virgil or Horace, Livy or Cicero, everything was grist that came to the mill of these enthusiasts.

The foundations of the new learning were thus laid in collections of manuscripts, the formation of libraries, the careful copying of manuscripts, and finally, to crown it all, the invention of printing. This whole great process was hastened by the capture of Constantinople and a general movement of Greek scholars westward. These brought with them strange manners, long beards, trailing mantles, and painted eyebrows. But they brought precious manuscripts with them and a key to turn a great lock; they brought with them the knowledge of Greek.[7] One group of scholars used this key to unlock Homer and Plato, but another and more serious group used it to unlock the New Testament, and the history of Christianity began to be changed.

Painting and architecture furnish letters a golden setting

Painting and architecture furnished letters a golden setting. The meagre canvases which had adorned the altars and chapels of Christian churches flowered out into the splendid paintings of the Renaissance. The

[6]Symonds, *The Revival of Learning*, p. 74 *et seq.*

[7]This really began before the fall of Constantinople.

subjects were still more generally religious than secular, but the men and women who sit at the table of the marriage feast of Cana are proud and strong, bejewelled, clad in silks and velvets, and drawn in lines which suggest that at last the painter had begun to know his anatomy. The women of these pictures are full blown. The old pagan love of beauty for its own sake reasserted itself. Artists took the Olympians for their subjects and painted them with a splendour of colour and line Rome and Athens had never known. The pictured distinction between Venus and Mary Magdalene became strangely elusive.

V

Paganism comes back after its long exile

Of course, a sheer paganism came back with the pagan poets, and the pagan marbles and bronzes found in Roman gardens were set up in the light again. There was nothing in the movement so far to release new religious forces. The Roman Church took very kindly to this rediscovery of the past of Rome and Athens, gave commissions to the great painters, and employed their architects to build new churches with classic pillars and lines. Indeed, for a little the Church came near going pagan altogether; its whole-hearted surrender to art and beauty and the collector's passion did much to alienate the still austere-minded nations of the North. The fact that they had to help pay for new churches to adorn Rome or old bronzes to delight a cardinal, with nothing in it for themselves, did not increase their enthusiasm for the Italian Renaissance.

The Christian mind turns to the New Testament

But the critical study of the New Testament did profoundly affect the Christian mind. His return to New Testament sources gave the scholar a dangerous independence. He began to check off the glosses of the theologian and the claims of the churchman by the actual words and the plain actual meanings of the Gospels and Epistles, and what he found in these documents did not seem to fit in with what he actually saw about him in the manners and morals of the

Church. An authority was beginning to emerge with a power to summon all lesser authorities to its august tribunal and assert itself above them all.

A new authority asserts itself

Those who saw the sad estate of the Church in the clear searching light of the New Testament hoped that the sickness of Christendom would be cured by a general enlightenment of the human mind. Erasmus was the most distinguished representative of this group. He brought the full force of a marvellously acute mind to bear upon the texts and interpretations of the New Testament. He brought the edge of a terribly cutting satire to bear against the follies and stupidities of the unlearned churchmen.

Laughter began to come back into literature again, the mordant laughter of satire which came dangerously near laughing an ancient order down. The better mind of the Church welcomed the new learning, felt the implication of the light it let fall upon the ecclesiastical order, and was willing to coöperate with the scholar for a reformation which would come through the illumination of the mind and the refinement of the spirit.

And here we face another of these strategic "ifs" of history. If there had been in organized Christianity a more acute understanding of what lay just beneath the surface of an order which seemed as far from breaking up as any time within the last two or three hundred years, along with a creative willingness to take in hand the more serious abuses of which everyone was conscious, history might have taken another line. If there had been on both sides an ampler measure of patience, time might have done in slow transforming ways what haste undertakes to do in a day—and then leaves time really to finish. If Christendom had really been Christian, if Erasmus had had a little more of Martin Luther and Martin Luther a little more of Erasmus, everything might have been different. But this also is a futile imagining and perhaps things could never have been different at all, the forces in action being, by that time, beyond the power of any man or any church to control.

Is special development beyond our control?

I am not so sure of this last sentence. There have been enough fatalities in history to make any student of history a fatalist, but if we are to agree that social development is beyond the power of intelligent control, we have practically surrendered the hope of intelligent social progress and made the human enterprise morally meaningless. But social intelligence is itself the slowest of growths. Long experience is needed for its creation, and the maturing power to interpret experience, trace consequences to their cause, and so bring the force of experience to bear upon the future. We are only now beginning to understand the alphabet of the wise direction of the enormously complicated situations in which we are involved toward any desirable issue; the Sixteenth Century Church was far more helpless and ignorant.

The Reformation checked, on both sides, the growth of humanism

No interest suffered more acutely through the Reformation than the humanism which went so far to create it. The Reformation and the Counter Reformation between them checked almost immediately the free movement of the spirit and the free inquiry of the mind. The general religious temper grew hard and dogmatic; religion and learning were hopelessly entangled in the ambitions, the folly of ecclesiastics, kings, and emperors. The strain broke in a long century of fighting which left Germany devasted and depopulated. Italian cities were sacked by a strange combination of Lutheran and Spaniard, and all the lovely ripening of the humanities, of which the humanists dreamed, was long deferred.

But for all that, humanism did its work; it dissolved sterile intellectual authorities and theological dogmatism, made possible a return of Northern Christianity to New Testament sources, and, in general, demanded and secured for itself a freer and more congenial intellectual and spiritual order. The pity was that it did not or could not win that freedom purely by its own methods.

The Church is slow to sense a changing world

The Church was more than slow to feel the stir of portentous forces. The Roman See was slower still to take proper measures with its own household; it was positively hostile to any demand for reform even though such demands were made by loyal churchmen. For a hundred years before the crisis there had been a general demand for the reformation of the Church "in head and members," but the reforming councils of the Fifteenth Century came to nothing or worse. By a tragic contradiction the Council of Constance, which might have saved the unity of Christendom, is best remembered by the pageantry with which it invested itself, the broken faith of an Emperor, and an ivy-grown monument where John Huss was burned.

The Church had lost the habit and force of representative action. Power had been so long centred in the head that the members were half paralyzed. The councils were called but they were called too late; it was all like summoning the States General on the eve of the French Revolution, when the States General had no actual rooting in the machinery of French government and had lost its habitude of action. The Church councils had no habit of authority, and they were, besides, helpless in the hands of accomplished and unscrupulous diplomats. Their failure made the situation more hopeless. Those who had the real good of the Church at heart were discouraged, and those who felt that the term of its usefulness drew near an end found much to strengthen their position.

VI

A general failure of Christianity a third cause of the Reformation

Other elements combined to heighten its strategic weakness. I have no mind to give a controversial character to these studies, or paint a picture more sadly dark than the grave recital of facts, which are the commonplaces of all open-minded historians, justify. Christianity for the time had failed. The responsibilities for its failure may be distributed as you will; the then Catholic Church must take

its full share of blame. But the deeper failure was in the minds and spirits of men generally; the sharpest indictments one can draw against the Church is that it fell in with these ways instead of trying to correct them, and made its own tragic contributions to the moral degeneracy of the time.

The instinct of the Northern peoples fastened with a sure touch upon the central seat of the Church's sickness; it was in the administration of Rome. The excessive wealth of the Church had become not only a source of danger to the spiritual integrity of Christianity, but a disturbing factor in the economic situation of Europe. Europe was passing through one of those periods of economic changes which have always so profoundly affected history; the Turks had captured Constantinople and closed the old trade routes toward the East; Columbus had discovered America and opened new trade routes which were to become ways of magic and wonder to the stored treasures of the Montezumas and the Incas. Rising price levels were lifted higher by a tide of gold and silver from the West. The capitalist was begining to cast his long shadow across society. The cities were prosperous, but the country regions generally were poor and agriculture was suffering.

The lower classes suffer from changing economic conditions

Up to the year 1500 the peasant and the day labourer had been prosperous. About the beginnings of the Sixteenth Century prices had increased at least fifty per cent., wages had remained stationary, and the poor common folk, particularly in Germany, were caught between increasing poverty on one side and the hard rule of their feudal superiors on the other. Meanwhile, the Church possessed an enormous extent of the richest land in Europe which was withdrawn from taxation, and appeared to make no corresponding contribution to the well-being of society. The Church had an old habit of using some of its revenues for charity. It had been the almsgiver of the Middle Ages, but its methods had ceased to be helpful, and, besides, the range of its charity was limited. The revenues of the Church were now more and more absorbed in the luxurious living of high churchmen and ambitious building projects. St. Peter's domi-

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nates its fountained square in Rome, and you see its dome afar like a cloud across the Campagna, but it cost the Church far too much.

Fair-minded historians are inclined to agree that the land hunger of landless nobles and the hunger for more land of landed nobles were contributing elements in the Reformation. But the matter probably goes deeper than that. Secular society was reaching out in a blind, costly way for all the economic resources of the State. On the other hand, the rise of capitalism and the growth of trade were generally unfavourable to the Church. Here was really, by the beginning of the Sixteenth Century, a new world—how new we can hardly understand. And the Church was the precipitate and survival of an old world.

The money power comes in

There was a competition among the great and the proud which sent them to the money lender. The money lender wanted interest, but the canon law forbade interest, and the civil law had the habit of enforcing Church law. Capital had its way, as it usually has; got its interest, as it usually does. The Church denounced usury and refused absolution to those guilty of it, but qualified its own laws in accommodating ways.

This did not check the rise of the money power but it sadly irritated it; the Church has had ample occasion since to know what happens when that particular power is irritated. In general, the influence of the Church was against luxury and extravagance, and the time was all for luxury and extravagance. There is really a good deal to say, as we see it all from this distance, for the attempt of the Church to check the rising tide of material interest, but the only result then was to create one more set of antagonisms. The close association between Protestantism and industrial capitalism began even before the Reformation.[8]

[8] I have taken this summary of the influence of the economic situation upon the Reformation generally, from the introduction to Vedder's *The Reformation in Germany*. Lindsay's "Study of Social Conditions in Germany" in his *History of the Reformation* covers much the same ground and reaches very much the same conclusion. He notes a cycle of famine years from 1490 to 1503 which contributed largely to the desperate condition of the German peasants.

The picture is substantially complete: a church rich in land and the stored gold and silver of cathedral treasuries (cartloads of precious gifts are said to have been taken from the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury), using its wealth in unsocial ways and driving hard for more money, condemning the pursuit of money and asking for it in the next breath—much like the Church to-day. Add also the rise of a money power which affected the old social balance, desperate poverty among the peasants, a natural hunger for possession among the impoverished great, and a general blindness in everybody concerned to what was actually going on. The picture ought not to be made too dark. There was still a simple, wholesome religious life in Germany. The long development of mysticism had worked itself out in a homely and ethical piety, which found its support in prayer and praise and made the family altar more hallowed than the altar of the Church.

This folk-religion was near to the hearthstone and the soil. It was independent of high Church politics; Rome and the far-off centres of ecclesiastical administration meant nothing to it; they were a burden rather than a help. And always among the learned and independent thinkers there was the new mind of humanism and generally a new knowledge of the Bible, and a new dependence upon it. The Church would have done well to take account of such forces as these. It is piteously strange with what blindness old orders creep up the very event of their dissolution.

VII

The fateful combination arrives

Only one thing was lacking—an occasion for mobilization, the one force to release all the rest. All the elements of strife were assembled, imponderable standing armies of pride and discontent, and some vision of a juster, holier order. When the times are ripe like that, anything will do to release the issue. It was all much like Eupore fourteen years ago when a pistol shot in Sarajevo turned to drum fire along a thousand miles of front. This time the pistol shot was fired unwittingly. That fateful

combination of the man, the time, and the cause, from which history is redated, had arrived.

Martin Luther

The story of Martin Luther needs no telling here. Few men have been the source and the centre of so much, the source of so vast an event, the centre of so much controversy. He was essentially simple and centrally strong with a margin of contradiction; he was both a monk and a mystic with a rough, elemental, peasant human nature from first to last. He faced danger like a soldier, and threw an inkstand at the ghost of the devil.[9] He never escaped his four inheritances: he was born a German peasant, twice born a mystic, trained as a churchman, ripened into a theologian and became a throne-shaking reformer in spite of himself.

The churchman in him made him a church builder, the mystic made him the comrade and interpreter of St. Paul, a lover of *The Theologia Germanica* and the creator of a new religion of experience; this peasant inheritance gave him rough manners, elemental speech, elemental force, and an anvil-like power to wear out many hammers. His German inheritance gave him that instinctive understanding of the strong, unseen currents of his race and his time, which only those who have lived close to common life possess, and then only once in a hundred years. He knew the German people as Abraham Lincoln knew the American people and, when he spoke for them, they understood themselves.

His theological inheritance made him doctrinally centred, and doctrinally intolerant, and went a long way toward defeating what he himself began. Luther the theologian drove the first wedge into Protestantism by his divisive doctrinal tenacity, Luther the peasant wrote the most indefensible chapter in his own life story through his attitude toward his brother peasants. But all this cannot obscure the massive solidity of his character, the enormous force of his accomplishments, the soldier-like quality of his courage, and his deep human tender-

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[9]Dr. Robert Nichols says there is no basis for this story. I am sorry. It spoils a detail of the drama.

ness. He did not set out to be a reformer and least of all to rewrite history; nor could he ever have rewritten it alone. All the forces we have been considering, friends and foes alike, helped him to begin that chapter of religion as a free adventure which we may date from 1520.

He was more concerned, to begin with, about his own soul than anything else. His father, proud of his ability, would have made a lawyer of him. He chose the monastic life with dramatic suddenness, called, he says, by an apparition from heaven, another St. Paul, struck down in the desert. The Luther thus converted to the monastic life was Luther the mystic. The Luther whom the monastery developed was Luther the sound scholar, the effective preacher, the popular professor. But something was taking place in his soul during all these years. He actually followed the Mystic Way, though the theological bent of his mind sought a doctrinal and Biblical support.

He had a consuming sense of sin, due rather to the sensitiveness of his spirit than the fault of his life, for, up to this time, his most searching critics find no fault in his character. He did not make himself a cross like Suso, but he fasted, prayed, and kept vigil beyond his strength to bear. Wise advisers in the monastery showed him a better way, but he had to find the grace of God for himself. And he found the road of it in the teachings of St. Paul and his doctrine of justification by faith which supplied the doctrinal basis of the Reformation.

VIII

The strategic issue

There was as yet no need for him to separate himself from the Church, or the Church to excommunicate him; he was taking a line which a minority of the Church had always taken, finding their peace in the sense of God's nearness and love and living in obedience to the Church at the same time. He came into conflict with the Church through his opposition to the sale of indulgences. The shameful abuse of this practice was beyond debate, and it happened to furnish the one strategic

issue to bring Luther into action. It challenged in the most concrete way imaginable that free forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus Christ, in which he had found his own religious peace, and about which all his religious thinking centred. He struck with all his indignant strength at the very theory of Indulgence, and the rest is history.

Luther strikes at Indulgence

It would not have been a difficult matter for the Church to make the minor accommodation which Luther demanded, except that the accommodation involved the loss of revenues, and the Church was not used to have its policy dictated by professorial monks. Whether the situation could have been saved by that minor accommodation, no one can say. Probably not. There were vaster forces in reserve bound to come into action upon some occasion or other. The quarrel, which is too trivial a word, between the Reformers and Rome "grew," as Guignebert says, "to be a resumption and, as it were, a recapitulation of all the controversies of the past with regard to the government, and general management, and the spirit of the Church."[10] The occasion was a detail.

Circumstances themselves sheltered Luther, as none who had taken the same strong line before him had been sheltered. He had the sympathy and protection of the Elector of Saxony. The confused state of the German Empire built a kind of breakwater around him and the spirit of northern Europe and the vast drive of destiny did the rest. The stage was Europe, the actors were princes and emperors and popes, the hidden passion of the Friends of God, and the forces which were remaking civilization. A German monk, who had become a force for time to reckon with, held the centre of the stage and held it superbly for a season. He had a sense for the dramatic, he played his part with arresting power. The burning of the Papal Bull was perhaps only a gesture, but what a superb gesture it was! The light of that bonfire has shone across the centuries and the shouting of the students about it found a thousand repercussions.

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[10] *Christianity*, p. 391.

Luther goes to Worms, and the issue is joined

He went to Worms riding in a cart, but making a chariot of it and carrying with him the hope and support of a nation. The peasant and the Emperor who faced one another there held the future of Europe in their hands; if anyone could have seen the tangled issues which streamed out in every direction from those two central figures, he would have found no words to tell what he saw. Luther made a great oration there, first in German and then in Latin. But the world remembers only how he said at the beginning that he would go if there were as many devils in the way as tiles upon the housetops,[11] and how he said at the end that his conscience being captive to the word of God, he could no other since "it is neither right nor safe to act against conscience."[12] And in those words the issue was determined.

The whole of Europe is drawn in

It is rarely given any man to formulate the issue upon which history divides in so simple or in so final a way. His friends added action to drama by hiding him in the Wartburg. He heightened the action by marrying Catherine von Bora. What he began swept Europe into the tumult of it. Kings and churchmen hastened to come onto the stage. It was very soon no drama at all, but a struggle of opposing forces in which every social, religious, political, and national interest was involved. Kings called out their armies and the Church brought out its vast power of threat, influence, and appeal. No man could tell where religious interest ended and the emerging complexity of a new world order began. So great a matter does a little spark kindle.

The first phase of Reformed religion quiet and simple

The earlier phases of the German Reformation were almost idyllic in their simplicity. Sometimes, with the consent of the bishop, the parish priest preached the new doctrine in the parish church. Sometimes the bishop forbade, and the people followed their pastor to the fields

[11]There are different versions of this saying. Preserved Smith doubts it; Vedder stands for it.

[12]Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, p. 307.

where he taught them a simple faith in an older temple. Sometimes the priest preached under the lime trees in the churchyard.[13]

Nothing would seem to have been changed for them save that they might use the language they knew instead of a language they did not know and be led directly into the Divine Presence and go on as before. Rome was far away, and all they asked was to keep on in near and homely and simple ways. The Church was still there with its memories and associations and even its saints; the priest was still a priest, but it was all too simple. State and Church did not mean to let things go on like that—neither did the reformers, though they did not know it yet.

IX

There was enormous adjustment implicit in every phase of the situation. Luther's excommunication carried with it the eventual excommunication of all his followers and all his doctrine, and opened an abyss between the followers of the new way and the old Church which has never been bridged since. The property of the Church complicated the situation. Even if Rome had been willing to let the people go, it was naturally unwilling to let the property go. Where the Reformation carried the State with it, the Church property went with the State. It was finally fretted away in fashions which only a specialist could follow out in detail; the lands generally going back into secular hands and mostly through the favouritism of kings and princes.

Pride and authority came into action quickly, of course. In all public affairs there had been no mind in Europe for a thousand years but the mind of kings and ecclesiastics. These did not always agree when their own interests were involved, but they did agree in continuing their rule. And any authority taken from them had to be taken from a closed fist sword guarded. If the civil power had let the new religious movement alone, it would in the end have found its own level. If the Church had

[13]Vedder, *History of the Reformation*, p. 158.

let it alone, Catholicism would probably be in no worse a state and probably in a better position than it is to-day, and if the reformers had let their own movements alone, they would have saved Protestantism a deal of division.

But Modern Europe was born in the travail of the Reformation

But nobody would let it alone; very likely it could not have been let alone. As one tries to see the whole thing in its entirety, the soundest element in it seems to have been a deep instinct of common folk for a simpler faith and, maybe, for a more immediate sense of God's presence and forgiveness. The movements of the Reformation and all that went along with it filled Europe with fightings and divisions for almost exactly one hundred and twenty-five years and, when the dust of the last battle was laid and trampled lands had begun to grow green again, everything had changed, and modern Europe had been born in so tremendous a travail.

Any consideration of the general character of the Protestant mind is reserved for the end of the next chapter, and that involves the reaction of the Reformation upon the Christian mind generally. But there is a place here for some general considerations.

The Reformation and the Christian mind

The Reformation did not radically change the Christian mind on either side the line. Catholics and Protestants still remained Christian. The Catholic Church was for a period deeply shaken but it gathered its forces together and in the Counter-Reformation recovered lost territory and consolidated its position. Ignatius Loyola created for the Church a disciplined force whose resourceful adaptability made them both useful to Rome and distrusted by society, but they did their work.

The Council of Trent pronounced upon a range of subjects to fill a quarter of a column in a general index but the Church surrendered no essential position. The graver pre-Reformation abuses did not, however, reappear. Religion certainly became more real. The Reformed Christian mind became doctrinally evangelical, and a sense of the saving nearness of God gained

a new meaning for the devout. Christianity generally passed through a searching ordeal. Chapters of the Reformation story were written in blood, but in such a bath as that it was re-baptized into reality.

Post-Reformation Christianity has been richer in content, more many-sided in expression than before. The many-branched growth into which it has spread has probably been worth the cost. The unity of the old Church was being maintained at the cost of variety and vitality. It is well for the world to have known and history recorded the enormous variation of which the Christian is capable. Religion would be poor without High Mass in St. Peter's and poor without a Quaker meeting and all that lies between.

A great liberty of expression has been secured for various temperaments. This freedom of faith and worship has been worth the blood it cost. The Catholic Church itself has profited by the freedom and challenge of Protestantism. The annals of conscientious devotion to the gleam the soul follows, have been enriched by a lengthening record of sacrificial constancy. The ethical standards of Christianity generally have been raised and purified. Something has been released which it will be hard and, some think, undesirable to put back into one form again.

If there should be in the distant future a reintegration of Church forms, it will be poor and indefensible unless it includes and safeguards all the ample growth, rooted in the hospitable soil of our various humanity, and watered not a little with blood and tears, into which the Christian religion has, in the last four hundred years, burgeoned out.

Chapter XII

THE CHRISTIAN MIND AS AN ADVENTURE IN LIBERTY: HOW IT ENDED

The two lines along which the Reformation moved

The Reformation moved along two parallel lines. It either dealt with populations in the mass or else it made its own churches out of individuals chosen from society at large. In northern Europe, England and Scotland took the first line. The German states either went substantially Lutheran or stayed Catholic, according to working principles of adjustment, finally reached at tremendous cost, as the often curiously named head of this or that state decided. But the princes must have responded in substantial measure to public opinion. South Germany eventually remained Catholic.

Lutheranism kept a due portion of its inheritance from the old Church

The manifold adjustments which the Reformation demanded were thus made inside the State and with a measure of State approval and control. The people continued to use their old churches and the old church furnishings; the altar was stripped bare; the saints gradually disappeared; whitewash covered up a good many frescoes, but the old spires pointed to the old stars; the services of the Church were done in German; the interpretation and administration of the sacrament kept a certain measure of ancient ceremonial and retained something of the mystic suggestion which had attended the Mass, but there was no longer a Real Presence upon the communion table.

I

Some of the old revenues were used for the support of the new worship. The Church became a State Church instead of

a Papal Church, the control of the State being substituted for the control of the Vatican. The bishop lost his mitre and his name in Germany, but he retained old powers of supervision and there was a ladder of clergy. Save for one change to which we shall come presently, the most searching inner change was doctrinal just as the most final outer change was the separation of the Reformed Church from communion with and obedience to the Papal See. This type of Reformation carried with it many of the corporate inheritances of the past.

What England did

The Reformation in England began at the top and anticipated the development of a sustaining public opinion. England by act of Parliament proclaimed herself free from Rome and after that, retaining everything that was left, which was the entirety of Christianity and ecclesiasticism in England, proceeded to modify it in ways too familiar to need to be enlarged upon. Bishops and archbishops and gray Canterbury and ivory-coloured Lincoln and all the lovely parish churches, whose towers and spires brooded over English waters and meadows, remained as they had been before; even the saints did not come down all at once and the pictured windows remained for a little unbroken, but the English prayerbook took the place of the Catholic liturgies, the thirty-nine articles articulated the faith of England. The Anglican Church thus created is now a part of the history of the English people.

But there was another type of Reformation, a new rebuilding of the Church out of living stones called from society at large by those like John Calvin, for example, who had a passion and faith for a new order and constructive genius to build it. These new Church builders went back to the New Testament for the substance of their doctrine and the fabric of their constitution. They supposed themselves to be building from the foundation up, as if nothing at all had happened for two thousand years, but that was an impossible dream.

Their churches had new names taken from New Testament lists of apostolic church offices, but the men and women who came into them brought the Christian mind twenty centuries had combined to create. And yet apostolic conditions were re-

newed. Those who went out from the old Church with no new State Church to go into, went with nothing but their faith and their courage, their empty hands and their questing souls.

A confusion of movements, out of which John Calvin brought a great order

The Reformation which began, and failed, in France was like this. The obscure ground swell of the Reformation known by a curious misrepresentative name, Anabaptist, being nothing other than the beginnings of an extreme democracy in religion with all its attendant confusions and excesses, was not even like this. It had no one great leader to bring it to any promised land, or any right name at all to be known by, nor much of anything else except an endless capacity to suffer, and patient power to wear out persecution and the prophecy of the independent churches of Europe and America, and a stormy splendour of democracy.

But a man like John Calvin did and could make a Church and find a proper name for it and give it a stiff backbone of doctrine, put iron in its blood, and, generally, divide the outcome of the Reformation between Lutheranism, the Calvinistic Reformation, and Anglicanism. Calvin won Geneva to his way of thinking, made it a citadel and source of a most militant faith, and preached in its old cathedral.

What he left in France could neither live nor die; it became deeply entangled in political faction, suffered dreadfully, held its walled cities, and finally substantially disappeared before the dragonnades and absolutisms of Louis XIV. In Holland Calvinism became the Dutch Reformed Church and a leaven to stir the Dutch to heroism of endeavour for their freedom. In Scotland it became the Scotch Presbyterian Church. In England it made Puritanism with its enormous social and political significance. In America it cemented the foundations of New England and lives in the very great force and considerable variety of the Presbyterian Church. This freer reform movement was in essence wholly independent of the State, although it more than once persistently sought to dominate the State, suffered greatly through its very defenselessness, and laid

the courses of its spiritual buildings in mortar tempered with blood.

II

The effect of all this upon the Christian mind

Now, what happened to the Christian mind in all this? What did happen was the modification of old elements, with a shifting of emphasis and new method, rather than any fundamental change. There are great elements in any historic mind which once established are never thereafter lost. The historic creeds controlled the faith of the new mind as they controlled the faith of the old. Protestantism inherited the whole of religion before the Reformation, just as America inherited the whole of England before the Declaration of Independence.

The very language of Christianity continued unchanged. The old literatures kept on doing their work. What the great theologians had done to theology flowed on in the central current of it, though in new channels. The essence of the Christian spirit was also continued in habits of prayer and praise and ordered worship, and a thousand things created through the centuries. But something did happen to the Christian mind: it became excessively doctrinal for one thing.

Protestantism endoctrinated this new phase of the Christian mind as it had not been endoctrinated since the Fourth and Fifth centuries. Doctrine before the Reformation had been only one aspect of a many-sided religious life; it was held in solution in the entire Catholic cultus and hardly touched the life of the average layman at all. A fair survey of forces which led up to the Reformation would show, I think, that the new faith had its choice of foundations upon which to build. It might have gone back—as Rauschenbusch suggests—to the mind of Christ and have won or lost as a new Christian ethic, gentle, humane, brotherly, and peace-loving, insisting upon human values, and winning or losing its own life in its unfailing passion for the Kingdom of God.

It might have become a pietistic movement with no great outer force but an immense inner leavening power. Some of

these things it did do, and the rest of them it will eventually have to do. But it made more of the mind of St. Paul than the mind of Jesus, and more of St. Paul's formal mind than his intensities of spiritual experience.

In choosing to build upon doctrine it followed, probably, the line of strongest necessity; something gripping with a supreme significance had to be offered to take the place of all that was being left behind. The natural interests of such minds as Luther's and John Calvin's fell in with the necessity and added to the force of it. Luther found his own support in the doctrine of justification by faith. He probably "felt" it in those ways which made it the secret of his own dear-bought peace, as St. Paul felt it, and the mystics felt the presence of God which they explained to the world in the mystic way.

Doctrinal emphasis tends to an excess of doctrinal division

But as the Reformers taught it, it did become a doctrine—a doctrine with widely divergent frontiers. Faith may be the simplest trust in the world, or it may be sheer intellectual consent to a creed, or it may be anything between. There was from the first in the genius of Protestantism the opportunity for an almost endless doctrinal division. Protestantism has held pretty close together in the central trunk of it, but the spread of its upper branches is a matter of record. The first doctrinal divisions centred about the interpretation of the sacrament and went on from that to the last refinement of free grace or predestination. Every doctrinal branching out carried with it a segment of the Reformed faith to become a separate organization.

But the matter goes deeper. The doctrinal mind has its own force and wealth, but it has its own limitations, too. There is nothing to soften it; its edges grow sharp; its insistences grow dogmatic and its charities begin to fail. Doctrine is by no means the whole of the Christian life, no matter how strong a structural support it may be. And when doctrine has become such an elaboration of the power to be different as it has become, it tends to crowd out the more tender and beautiful Christian graces. There was naturally a constant and hostile play of action and reaction between the old Church and

the new churches which began with the Reformation and has never ceased. The Catholic Church was fairly driven to emphasize and harden its own position. One may wonder whether the entire Christian mind has not been more sharp-edged since the Reformation than it was before.

III

The Christian mind lost catholicity

The entire Christian mind also lost in catholicity of spirit. I do not use this word in any narrow or technical sense, but only as it stands for inclusive sympathies and some sense of unity deeper than creed or form. The true catholic mind is generously understanding and nobly hospitable; it sees situations in their entirety; it does not ask the traffic of the spirit to be carried on any one track. This catholicity of mind, and the more gracious catholicity of spirit, is of the very essence of Christianity. Where it is lacking something vital and precious is gone. It does not necessarily depend upon forms, though many insist that it does. There was no ideal catholicity of spirit before the Reformation for there was the searching alienation of the Eastern and Western churches. But the Reformation multiplied and edged division. Christianity is moving slowly toward the reconciliation of its divided members, but it has an unspeakably long distance to go. The fears and jealousies, the arguments and defenses of four hundred years, have left their mark upon the soul of Christendom, and that mark goes deep.

The Protestant mind and the Bible

The Protestant mind was from the beginning and still is supported by one authority, the Old and New Testament.[1] We shall never, very likely, clearly understand from how much the new religious life cut itself off. The authority of

[1]Dr. Robert Nichols adds this comment: "I think this statement is so incomplete as to be misleading. It is a question of interpreting the Bible. The mediæval Church took for authority the Bible, as the Church interpreted it. The Protestants took the Bible as they interpreted it. Hence, while claiming the Bible as authority, early Protestantism really followed Church authority—the authority of the different parts of Protestantism. Early Protestantism stood for a 'Church-controlled civilization,' as Troelsch says. In this respect early Protestantism differs sharply from later."

the Church which both controlled and supported pre-Reformation Christianity was by no means so simple as the Church's own definition of it. It had very much the same authority over the lives of the devout that changing seasons and the unfailing force and nearness of nature have for us. These do not need to assert their authority over us; it is just "there," and we adapt ourselves to it until great regions of our lives are nothing more than a succession of obediences to winds and rains, dawn and sunset, and the ancient ways of Mother Earth.

How the Latin Catholic Church lay about the lives of its communicants

Before it began to be undone the Latin-Catholic Church had been like that to generations, whose ways of life were so interwoven with the ways of the Church as to give the Church something of the force of nature itself in every relationship. And then, besides, the Church had a way of asserting its authority and compelling obedience. But the true authority was not in the command, it was in the whole encompassing system. When that fell away, men were left strangely alone. They had only two or three choices of authority; in reality only two, which is, I suppose, all the choice we ever have in anything. They could rest upon the authority of their own experiences, or they must have a more definite concrete authority—and they chose the Bible.

The earlier authority of the Bible tied up with the authority of the Church

Now the Bible was no new authority even in the Sixteenth Century. The Church had always used it and always built upon it. But the Church had really come to include it in a vaster system. In not only supplemented the Bible by tradition, but, in a way difficult for a Protestant to understand, it set the Church before the Bible. One would have to qualify that statement immediately; it is too sharp as it stands. The Catholic maintained—

The Catholic Church recognizes two inspirations

and maintains—that the Church existed before the New Testament, being the direct creation of Jesus Christ, given through Him, that gift of the Spirit, which is the true secret of the Church's authority and the true guarantee

of its infallibility. The Church created the New Testament, not the New Testament the Church. The Church, therefore, possessed the Bible instead of being possessed by it, and though the Holy Scriptures were inspired of the Holy Ghost, the Church was inspired too, and its own inspiration gave it the right to deal at least on equal terms with the inspiration of the Scriptures.[2]

The Protestant churches recognize one inspiration

When the inspiration of the Church went, only the inspiration of the Bible remained, and there is no way of saying what a force this has been in the making of the Protestant mind. Those old inheritances which Christianity took over from the very beginning, the inheritance of prophet, psalmist, and law-giver, long overlaid by the ways of the Church, now came to light, as though you had cleared away some ancient building and laid bare its hidden foundations. Protestantism kept the foundations but built its own structure thereupon. The reformers went back to the New Testament for doctrine and the proof-text of doctrine; they went back to it to discover what a truly apostolic Church was meant to be; they went behind bishops to presbyters and behind presbyters to congregations. Their certainty of the infallible rightness of their authority grew more rigid as they continued to use it for defense, or attack, or the peace of their own souls. The first reformers really used the Bible in a freer way than their successors in less heroic times.

Since the pulpit had so largely taken the place of the altar, generations of preachers searched the Book for texts and invested their sermons with its authority. It was appointed to be read in all services; it lay where the hallowed vessels of the altar had stood and became, in its sanctity and authority, all that they had been in their sacramental suggestion. The saints fed their souls upon it, the hard-beset found in it an armoury from which to arm themselves for their spiritual warfare. John Bunyan used its texts as Cromwell's soldiers used their swords, putting the devil to flight with many a sharp thrust.

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[2]But this was only officially stated so late as the Council of Trent.

IV

The Protestant mind embarrassed by inherited theories about the Bible

The Protestant mind is beginning to pay the price for all this, because it tied up the Bible too straitly with a doctrine about it. It was made science and history in a too rigid way. John Milton's celestial system has the same mechanics as Dante's *Paradiso,* and Dante's Heaven and Earth were the heaven and earth of the first chapter of Genesis, with mediæval additions. A religious mind which had thus dug itself in to old understandings of earth and sky and invested them with infallibility, was in a poor strategic position to accommodate its faith to an age of telescopes and spectroscopes. The Protestant mind has gone out of its way to create for itself alternatives in the relation of religion to science and the general movement of human thought, which it need never have created. Nor has it allowed itself a sufficient theory of Divine guidance to deal with the situation thus created.

The Protestant mind found its support in its faith in an inerrant Bible

The Scriptures—Old and New Testaments—are a strong and ample foundation for faith, since they contain the entirety both of religion and life. They sound every depth, they reach every height of religious experience and carry with them their own authority through their range, their insight, and their timeless truth. This is enough for any book and it should not, in addition, be loaded with a burden it was not meant to bear.

But it is easy to understand why the reformed religion, fighting for its life and its freedom, invested the Scriptures out of which it grew and to which it constantly came back, with a rigid and infallible authority, down to the last letter. The new churches needed something tremendously concrete and reassuring and unfailing and unquestionable, to oppose the counter-drive of the corporate authority of the old Church. A movement which was conceived in controversy and brought forth in battles and agonies and martyrdoms, cannot conduct itself as it would in untroubled times. An army which is fight-

ing for liberty does not dare permit its soldiers to use their liberty on the battlefield.

V

But the actual support of the new faith was in more than a book. It was in the witness of the spirit and the force and need of the time. Embattled souls facing a masterful order and forsaking old securities found a new assurance in their own peace and certainty of God. The fateful passion for liberty then in action, in a world breaking from old forms, carried their enterprise upon its current. Luther was strongest in his telling appeal to "the nobility of the German nation" and "his Treatise on Christian Liberty." John Calvin was strongest in his recognition that a church is made of individuals, and his way of helping men to make their own church—and through it all was religion reaching for a new interpretation in experience.

The final support of any religion is in its meaning for life itself. Christianity had come too largely to depend upon external and traditional supports: the assurances of the Church, the ministry of the sacraments. But these are only means to an end, and the end itself is the peace and power to be found in the sense of God's presence, the persuasion of His forgiveness, the comfort of His love. The more devout in the religious life of the period before the Reformation had been feeling their way into this region. Any religion stands or falls by the test of reality of the experience it makes possible, and this is outstandingly true of evangelical Protestantism. I do not mean for a moment to say that Protestantism has a monopoly of religious experience, but only that, since it did away with so many of the supports to which the older religious experiences had clung, it had to make up for its lonely simplicities by a compensating wealth of religious experience.

Protestantism has not been consistently true to its own genius

The whole Protestant movement, with all its very great elements of strength, has always involved contradictory elements. It was in the beginning a reaction against an excessive authority, an adventure in freedom, a great confidence that the Spirit-guided life could

safely be left to itself. But it did not dare entirely to trust this confidence; it substituted new authorities for the old; it made the authority upon which it fell back more inelastic than it actually needed to be. It demanded free thought and denied it; its real strength was in the spiritual experience of its communicants, and yet it did not dare to trust this spiritual experience because it was afraid of enthusiasm and undisciplined spiritual ways. It has found itself entangled in almost every step of its history by these contradictions between theory and practice.

The explanation, of course, is in the historic situation. We are slow in learning how long it takes to shift the centres of authority in any region, and at what cost they are shifted. The whole adventure of democracy is an illustration in point. It is extraordinarily easy to be governed by a king and, if he should be the kind of hero-king Carlyle was always wanting, and never finding, benevolent, forceful, far-visioned, then the best thing we fallible folk could do, would be to let just that kind of king rule us and save ourselves all the trouble of governing ourselves.

Self-government means long discipline and a costly way of being taught wisdom through many mistakes. It means the creation of a common mind which is itself the product of an historic discipline. It needs fit material and very great courage and a rare faith in human nature and endless training, and, even then, when you have got the best of it, the best is none too good.

But all this is simplicity itself compared with spiritual democracy, that quest for a knowledge of God which comes through the illumination of the spirit and the mind and discipline of character, from many obediences painfully rendered, and many disobediences still more painfully atoned for. Something began in the Sixteenth Century which needed time and training to perfect, and if those who began it were afraid of what they saw, as their self-chosen road began to open before them, and undertook to safeguard themselves and their movement, it was the most natural thing in the world. We shall never be able to judge political liberty until we have far more facts in hand than we have to-day. We cannot judge

the outcome of what is essentially free adventure into religion, until we have far more facts in hand than we have today, and far more time for the movement to have carried itself through.

The Protestant mind and secular life

The new Protestant mind was far more intimately associated with politics and the secular side of society than the old Catholic mind had been. A statement like that needs to be enlarged. Pre-Reformation Christianity had been for a thousand years in most intimate and authoritative relation with the State. The Church had asserted a power over secular life Protestantism has never dared to assert; it has never put its foot on the neck of emperors; it has never kept them suppliant and barefoot in the snow waiting for absolution. The reformed religions have used the State both for a defense and a support. They have looked to the State to provide their revenues, collect their taxes, and control their communicants. In a few extreme instances the reformed churches have even gone so far as to compel the State to burn their heretics. Honours, after all, are fairly easy in this much debated region. I doubt if any mediæval society was more entirely the instrument of an ecclesiastical will than Geneva under John Calvin, or Massachusetts, for a season, under the Puritans.

VI

The Latin Catholic Church in the world but not of the world

But there has always been this difference: Protestantism has never had the sense of a corporate ecclesiastical life sharply divided from the general life of society, as had the Latin Catholic Church. The old Church was a complete society in itself; it was in the world and, in a way, of the world, but it was after all not the world. There is a very accurate sense in which the Church before the Reformation was the whole of society and the whole of society was the Church. No child could be born in Europe after, say, the Eleventh Century and not be born into the Church. There

was then such an entire identification of being alive at all and being a churchman as has simply ceased to exist.

But the Church as a spiritual corporation vested in its clergy is another matter. That Church was no mere human society. Its authorities were its own—God given—and exercised by the very rights which the authority itself conferred. The mediæval Church never treated with the secular society of which it was a part as an equal, nor allowed the world to forget what so profoundly divided the Church from the world.

Everything from the tonsure of its priests to the crimson of its cardinals contributed to this result. The Catholic clergy were celibate. This custom might be defended upon whatever grounds you pleased. It simplified, and still simplifies, the economic situation of the Catholic clergy: it should make them single-minded and unhampered by intimate domestic relations. The actual effect of it has been to put at the service of the Catholic Church a disciplined clergy whose interests, relationships, loyalties are, to an unparalleled degree, locked up in the Church, to create a sort of standing spiritual army with no distracting outside interests. Just this one fact went far toward separating the Church from a too intimate association with the going concerns of the world.

The clergy wore their own peculiar vestments and actually moved through society as a distinct order, touching the life about them at its high points, and yet withdrawn themselves from its entangling contacts. All that theory of ordination and consequent possession of grace and power which we have already considered, tended to maintain this separate status. The result is the most self-contained corporate life which has ever, for a long period of time, maintained itself in the general current of the world's history, refusing to be lost in that current and asserting its timeless authority over it.

Does society need an independent spiritual control?

There is no denying the advantage of a situation like this for the Church, and there are, I think, circumstances under which it is advantageous for society as a whole. Society does need both controls and corrections, which possess not only an ideal but an actual independence. The Anglican

Church, for example, is in position to do for English society what no one of the Free churches in America can do for American society. It does possess enabling independence; it does see things from the point of view of corporate Christianity, and not entirely from the point of view of politics, finance, and industry. A church like that, being less immediately responsive to fluctuating public opinion, more confidently independent of it, can bring a pressure to bear upon public opinion, which churches so immediately dependent upon popular support as the free church cannot command. It is not easy to boycott a church like that.

There is a very great deal going on just now to illustrate how difficult it is for a church which lives from a collection plate to criticize the business methods or the social ethic of those before whom the collection plate is held Sunday after Sunday. The whole social note in contemporaneous American church life is soft-pedalled by the economic and social dependence of the Church upon a general public opinion, which needs, almost more than anything else in the world, to be corrected by something outside itself.

There is, of course, another side to all this. The mind of Protestantism was impliedly from the first, though we have been reluctant to recognize the fact, just the spiritual and religious side of Protestant society as a whole. When Martin Luther appealed to the German nobility and John Calvin organized his church out of the general structure of Genevan society, the old mystic separatenesses with their strangely commingled elements of strength and weakness were finished forever.

A new order begins

You may call this the secularization of the Church and be quite right, or else you may call it the beginnings of the spiritualization of society and be equally right. Up to the Sixteenth Century religion had its own channelled bed; it flowed between immemorial banks, lifted above the general level of society as the Colorado River through the Imperial Valley.

In theory it would not permit itself to be influenced by what happened in other regions, nor receive as tributary anything

which lowered its high estate, or threatened to deflect its course. Passions and loyalties of humanity might make new channels for themselves and call these channels England or France, Italy or Germany—no matter—the Church kept within its own banks. Though the social mind might become secularized, humanized, and even begin to be scientific—no matter—the channels of the Church's thinking were already determined, the mind of the Church was separate and inviolate.

Of course, the situation was not so clean-cut as the theory of it. There are bound to be seepages from one channel to another and cross currents. You may defend an institution or a state of mind from the general influences of a changing world for a long time, but in the end those influences will make themselves felt. That kind of public opinion which is the entire mind of a great corporate fellowship, acting with unity and force through a long period, will finally reach and possess and transform any human institution. Public opinion will reach and register in an independent free church long, long before it reaches and registers in the Vatican, but give it time enough and mass enough and it will reach and register in the Vatican.

VII

The Protestant mind is bound to reflect the general mind of its time

The Protestant mind, through the very necessity of it, was bound to become simply the Christian aspect of the general mind of Protestant society. Its measure of ecclesiastic and doctrinal control must not for a moment be underestimated, but it had given hostages to society. The new churches were dependent upon forces outside themselves. The old dyke system had given away and the religious current, so to speak, began to find its level, or else to change the figure, currents of secular and social life overflowed into the channels which the Church so long had been able to keep to itself.

Lutheranism was generally controlled, as has been said, by the mind of the Princes, though very likely the Prince fairly enough represented the general religious mind of his subjects.

John Calvin created a very closely articulated ecclesiastical system in which lay authority was recognized and provided for —an immense advance. In any church, however, a strong clergy is sure to exert the larger influence, but if the clergy possesses the power of the keys, the laity possesses the power of the purse, and honours are easy.

In extreme Protestantism the Church begins to create the clergy

The Independent churches of the Reformation—Baptist, Congregational, and the like —frankly recognized the source of authority in the religious mind of the Church as a whole. They reversed the whole theory of ordination, and it was an audacious reversal. The clergy ceased to make the Church and the Church began to make the clergy. There have been no revolutionists for two thousand years like the first unconsidered groups of Independents who made a minister by the touch of laymen's hands. This was a revolution which went clean to the bottom.

Something new came into the Christian mind through that door, which began to rewrite the history of the Church in terms of democratic control, and the history of democracy in terms of religious idealism. The substance of sacerdotalism disappeared, though the shadow of it persisted. The sources of authority were in the whole fellowship of the Church. Old theories had to be modified, old philosophies rewritten, and the ways of God with man rediscovered, not in the narrow succession of the ordained, but in the entire fellowship of the devout. Practically everything which has been involved in the reconstitution of society and social theory for the last three hundred years was involved in that change.

For weal or woe, the Independent churches became the dependent church. Protestantism generally grew more responsive to the ebb and flow of public opinion. Protestant churches differ in the immediate degree of their response, but not in the essential nature of it. Churches with bishops respond more slowly than churches with presbyteries and general assemblies, and these in turn stand out longer and more stiffly than communions organized on a congregational basis. But sooner or later they all respond. They are dependent upon their com-

municants for financial support; they are sensitive to financial menace. Somewhere behind the choice of all their officers, from the bishop to the pastor and teacher, is the power of the ballot box. The voice of the people does become the voice of God.

But the real difference is not to be discovered in the time factor of an immediate or delayed response. It is rather in the fact that Protestantism has accepted its status as part of the going concern of society; it is the association of the Christian-minded; it is more than that, being still Church and still the Body of Christ. But it is nevertheless a cross section of this present world, and if the world thereby gains in being spiritualized, the Church has paid the price for it in being secularized. There is just now a considerable stir about this whole matter. We are told that Protestantism is becoming a class religion, a middle-class religion, a religion of the prosperous, the less socially adventurous, having ceased to be the prophet of things as they ought to be through being much engaged in pronouncing the benediction upon things as they are.

The new Church makes entangling alliances

All this is true, but it misses the point. The emerging Christian mind which is arriving by way of the Reformation, and arriving both belatedly and uncertainly, is facing the world full front and identifying itself with the whole going business of life. If secular means belonging to its own age, it is secular. Its ministry is no longer celibate; for the most part they wear no distinguishing clothes.

The Church is secular through the deep entanglements with the economic and industrial conditions of its time; it is secular because it is financially dependent and is itself an enormous growing business concern; it votes and approves this or that candidate, and writes planks in political platforms and has gone out to war. It uses the instrumentality of the State for the realization of its visions. It is increasingly scientifically minded and historically minded, and all this is inevitable. The Church cannot operate and was never meant to operate in a vacuum. It has no material to work with but human nature, and no time to work in but the present time, and no way of rebuking society without being itself rebuked, no way of carrying on its

holy warfare without using some temporal and earthly weapons.[3]

VIII

The Church must lose its life to save it

If this is the secularization of the Church, then we must make the most of it and, as far as this book goes, wait for the next chapter to understand all its consequences. But there is another side to it, a higher and more reassuring side; the secularization of the Church is the spiritualization of society. The followers of Jesus Christ were long ago told that there was no way for them to save their lives except by losing them. There is no way for the Church to save itself, except to lose itself in identification with the world of which it is a part, for the sake of finding itself again in a world which has been seized and transformed by the power and spirit of Jesus Christ. It would require a far more careful and analytical study than this to balance the losses and gains in the whole process. The losses are evident, the gains are deeper down and farther back. There is a great deal to be said for a church which, through the stoutly maintained separateness of its own life, approaches society from the outside without fear or favour.

The world must be saved from the inside, not the outside

I think it quite likely that something of the desire for organic Church unity, now so strongly in evidence in a divided Protestantism, is due just to the feeling that if we can create a Church strong enough, and apart enough, to treat with secular society on superior terms and dictate Christian policy from the outside, we shall win a fight we are now dangerously near losing. But society is never going to be saved by dictation from the outside; it will be saved only by an inner transformation accomplished by a leaven so much a part of the whole mass as to make it difficult

[3]A fairer recognition of this self-evident fact would modify a very great deal of the mordant criticism the Church—and particularly the Protestant Church—is just now getting. Something of the old theory that the Church is something unrelated to the general mind of its time lies behind all this criticism. Too many of these critics are actually freeing their souls about themselves and their neighbours, and using the Church for a whipping-boy.

to say which is leaven and which is meal till the whole mass is leavened. This was Jesus' way, to begin with, and, though we have come back to it slowly and at enormous cost, and, more than that, very unwillingly, the salvation both of Church and society may be the ultimate justification of the whole strange long road upon which we have come.

IX

The new Christian mind stripped religion too bare

There is among us a growing conviction that Protestantism has stripped religion too bare. The modern religious mind from the Protestant side has been too aridly intellectual; it has neglected a rich variety of religious need and response. We have already seen what a vital religious content sacramentarianism carries, and how serviceable the associations of religion with symbolism really are. The old cathedrals, which are just the concrete representation of the many-sidedness of religion, may have been overfurnished within and overbuilt without. Gothic architecture ended in arches which were too pointed and a lacework of stone which could not resist the elements, so fretting into dust through its own embroidered fineness.

There were too many saints in the niches, too many chapels, too many altars, too much of everything. Symbolism defeated itself through its own excesses. Jesus Christ was too far behind Mary, the Father was too far behind the Son, the windows were too rich to let the light in and, in one iconoclastic gesture, the Protestant mind swept aside, not only the burdens the arches were never built to bear, but too much of the central structure itself. The windows went, but beauty went with the windows; the saints disappeared, but there was nothing to fill their empty places; the misereres were silenced, but the silence left longing sorrow without a voice; the Real Presence disappeared from the altar and God suddenly became far away. The new religious mind did not at first too greatly miss what was gone. A militant enthusiasm for some one thing, which seems for the time being the most important thing in the

world, always has force enough to satisfy the soul through its complete absorption in what it seeks.

A militant zeal will carry religion till its point is won

A simple illustration of this will do as well as any: Puritanism was born of a consuming passion for simplicity in worship, freedom in faith, and searching goodness in conduct. As long as these were living and unwon issues the enormous force of Puritanism found its entirely adequate support in just these two or three militant passions. When men, women, and children are willing to die for the right to sing the psalms of David in a metrical version without an organ, then the psalms of David are more than a substitute for every other kind of music.

To sing them on a Scotch hillside in a wet dawn is praise enough, and a Scotch girl tied to a stake in the Blednoch will repeat their verses till the flood tide silences her fresh young voice, dying for a vision and a song. If men are willing to live, and die, for the right to make a church out of a handful of people uncontrolled by any state, unhampered by any ecclesiastic, with no guide or light at all save the guide and light of conscience, then a log meeting house on Plymouth Hill has a glory to match Chartres and Canterbury.

The Protestant mind was long sustained by these passions, and realized itself in the triumph of these understandings and convictions. For two hundred years and more Protestantism was so occupied with making a Protestant Church as to forget how much it had lost, since the deeper secret of it was just to lose these things and find God without them.

When the cause is won something more is needed

But when the creative and militant force of the movement began to spend itself because what had been sought was reasonably found, then the new mind was compelled to consider whether what it had found was enough. The faith which builds a plain meeting house and worships therein without vestment, liturgy, or altar, so long as it is an embattled faith, has a fullness and splendour of its own to compensate for the want of everything else. But when the meeting house is built and there is no one to dispute worshipping therein, and

the new communion has become a comfortable and accomplished fact, the worshipper begins to look about his meeting house and wonder whether it does not need more furnishing. When he begins to refurnish it, he finds the old ways of furnishing, old symbols and old supports asking to be let in again, and actually justifying themselves when they have come back.

It still remains to be seen whether the line the Protestant mind is taking in securing these supports will entirely answer the purpose. The true symbolisms and reënforcements of religion are always a natural growth, never imitations; they are created by their own proper spirit. It is a little doubtful whether we shall get what we want through merely building Gothic churches again or clothing the worship of the Twentieth Century with the vestments of the Twelfth. What the Twelfth Century worshipped through and with, was not something put on from the outside but something which grew naturally out of the spirit of the Twelfth Century, necessary and inevitable.

Our own religious mind may need to secure a more ample support for faith, worship, reverence, and the sense of God's presence through what it creates, rather than through what it borrows. There is now an abundant material for a religious symbolism using the facts and forces of the present world—for litanies which beseech deliverance from the perils of the Twentieth Century. This creation may take a long time, but there is a general recognition that the reactions of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries against the older religious forms and supports, need to be corrected and we are groping our way toward that correction.[4]

X

The Christian mind meets the scientific mind

Finally the new Christian mind began to be engaged by the emerging scientific mind, and the conflict thus created slowly assumed a portentous significance. The most challenging thing science is doing is not to write its own book of

[4]Of course this last section deals only with non-liturgical Puritanism.

Genesis and supply its own answers to "Whence" and "Whither" and "Why." Religion has always been the explanation of reality in terms of its own facts and forces. Theology and even philosophy are always subdued by some colour of the human soul, dipped in some dye of fear or need or longing.

Pure science does not permit hope or fears or any treasured confidence to colour its conclusions. It sees nothing but a chemical reaction in a test tube and metabolism in the human body. It searches the heavens not to find the glory of God, but the chemical composition, the orbital movements and the spatial relationships of the stars. And it is slowly dissolving the whole order in which man's soul has hitherto found its peace and security, and threatens to dissolve the soul itself.

Christianity had built its own shelter for the soul

The Christian mind so late as the middle of the last century was a unity of faith and understanding, supplying a complete shelter for the human spirit within the loneliness of the world order. Everything locked up together; the world itself had been created as a stage upon which man would play out his brief and pregnant part; it was only the threshold of another world as time was only the threshold of eternity. God had created man from the clay to glorify and enjoy Him forever. He had provided a way to save His own from the ruin in which their sin had involved them.

If the ways of the world were hard, there was discipline in their roughness, and beyond it all there were the compensations of Heaven for the faithful and the dark finality of hell for the unrepentant. The whole system was complete in every detail. Devout thought had been elaborating it for a millennium and a half. The Church was the earthly trustee of the entire process, divinely commissioned, supplied with the proper authority and wisdom enough to carry a man through if only he yielded himself to its sheltering will.

We ought not to underestimate how final and satisfactory and self-sufficient this scheme really was. As long as one lived inside it he was safe; there was no profit at all outside it, only dark and fearsome uncertainty. It was created out of the pro-

foundest needs of the human soul and has satisfied them. Nothing else made any difference; the whole enterprise of life could be carried through within this shelter.

The Protestant mind took this over without substantial modification. It shifted the centre of authority a little, but the scheme remained unchanged; there was nothing yet to change it, everything fitted together. The stars girdled the Zodiac with their friendly light. The daily circle of the sun was near and kind. God had nothing but this world to occupy His attention, if one may say an irreverent thing reverently. The earth was the centre of the little universe men knew. Man was the centre of the world, the beginning and the end of the creative process, and everything else was attendant upon his spiritual progress from time to eternity.

No ecclesiastical order could have maintained this system unchanged when scientific knowledge began finally to dissolve it, but an interlocking religious system, such as the Latin Catholic Church had, and has, a power of resistance enormously difficult to penetrate. It would be foolish to say the massive Roman Catholic order has remained unchanged, but compared to the penetration of the Protestant mind by the scientific mind, Catholicism remains relatively untouched. In some ways it has gained through the whole process. It has offered a shelter to the more cautious; it supplies an at-homeness in which many lonely souls have found a peace they could not find in the welter of a changing order.

The Church which still maintains itself most strongly profits thereby

When vast ranges of the human mind are invaded by forces far more strong to dissolve than to unify and create, whatever stands unmoved has an advantage never for a moment to be underestimated. That Renaissance of Catholicism, which is one of the undebatable facts of our time, is due in part to just this. Mr. Matthew Arnold prophesied it forty years ago with a prescient sagacity. He said that consistent convervatism is bound to gain, through the very uncertainties and dissolutions which were attending the liberal movement in religion and politics.

XI

The freer faith feels the challenge of another order

The friends of liberalism, generally, are not just now as confident as they were thirty years ago; they are just beginning to sense the vastness of the adventure to which they are committed; they feel the chill touch of winds blowing in from the uncharted seas upon which they so high-heartedly launched their ships. Everything is changed; the frontiers of the universe have fallen back to unimaginable distances; our world is no longer the centre of anything; it is a marginal speck on the edge of immensity.

We have made the distance which light crosses in a year the unit of our interstellar measurement, and the light beams whose staggering revelations we read on the bands of the spectroscope may have left their source a hundred thousand light years ago. As long as there was some assuring correspondence between the spiritual shelter man found for himself in his religious faith, and his understanding of the world about him, the system stood intact.

Faith faces a growing wonder

Now that his world is become a speck on the edge of an abyss, a lonely atom in immensity, he begins to wonder whether the entire concern of God is focussed upon that atom; or whether a God who fills a universe like that cares anything for man at all; or whether there is any Divine Providence sheltering us from birth to death, and opening for us then the gates of everlasting life; or any reality at all save an immeasurable drift of cosmic energy taking protean, but always time-doomed, forms.

The crucial significance of changed scientific understandings for the Christian mind

We have hardly as yet begun to sense the significance of all this, but our apprehension of its consequences is the secret of the most profound disturbance in the liberal religious mind to-day. It would be utterly untrue to say that the Protestant mind has accepted all the consequences of it, any more than has the Catholic mind. Great bodies of devout Chris-

tians of every communion live and die in the old sheltering faith. But something is happening, for all that. The liberal Protestant mind has been the first to register to the significance of the change. Religion is gradually, at the edges and with no clear understanding of what is really happening, beginning to change its age-old character. The elements of assurance and security, in the need for which the religious quest began, in the possession of which the quest thought itself ended, are beginning to be lost. If they cannot be reëstablished the state of religion is perilous.

Words are tremendously significant things. The disappearance of a dominant word often marks the end of an epoch, as though you should bury a civilization or a culture or a religion in the same grave in which the word was buried. A word may rise above the horizons of time, as though one should see the northern star dip below the horizon and the southern cross assert its celestial empire. One new and tremendously significant word is beginning to rise over the religious horizon—it is the word "adventure." Even those who are beginning to use it may not understand all that it involves. But the word is here. Adventure is everything security is not; it is uncertainty; it is courage exploring new worlds; it is a dream going out to battle, or a hope setting out to find a promised land; it has no guarantee except its dreams and its hopes and some inner assurance that a gallant quest is never in vain, for whether you find what you set out for, you still have the adventure of the quest itself.

Religion has always been something like that; it was born in the adventure of the soul. It was man's first quest for friendship, meaning, and spiritual satisfaction in an order to which he felt himself alien. It was his quest for God and it has not been in vain. But when the quest is, for the time, satisfactorily carried through, religion begins to lose the element of adventure. What it really seeks is security, and once security is found the adventure ends. Religion makes a shelter of its discoveries, builds a wall of faith around the regions it has come to possess; it becomes a system, sure, authoritative, comforting, illuminating and, as it fondly dreams, final.

Christianity has become just that, and for the great body of Christians it is still that, but the signs are not wanting that it is standing once more upon the threshold of new adventure, is being compelled to set out once more to find a spiritual home for men. Some of the difficulties it faces are more likely the creation of imagination rather than reality. The universe has changed, but life is strangely unchanged. The astronomers tell us how far away the stars are, but we actually see them as our fathers' fathers saw them, serene and tranquillizing specks of light in the blue.

It may be that our adventure is no more difficult than their adventure, who first reached out to touch God in some extremity of need and loneliness, and that though the nebula in Hercules is one hundred thousand light years away, God is as near now as He was when those who sought Him first believed the stars were lonely lights hung in the ceiling of the world. But, for the time, the disquieting sense of challenging forces, which are driving at the deep hidden heart of religious assurances, is strongly in evidence.

Adventure may keep Christianity alive

As one casts up the spiritual accounts of the last four hundred years one sees that all this was implicit in what began at Wittenberg and Geneva. When the Christian mind began its adventure in Christian liberty, it took a road whose end could not be foreseen. It has no choice but to keep to it and trust the issue to truth and duty and the essential spirit and sovereignty of Christianity. Free roads are always perilous but they are the only secure roads because, as nearly as human experience can demonstrate anything, they are the divinely appointed roads for the human enterprise. Perhaps the most wonderful quality of religion is that it was never meant to be finished.

Meanwhile we have to ask ourselves what practical adjustments the perplexed Christian mind is now making, and that is the next chapter.

Chapter XIII

THE CHRISTIAN MIND BECOMES HUMANITARIAN

The position of Christianity in the Twentieth Century like its situation in the Second and Third

THERE are arresting parallels between the situation in which Christianity found itself in the first three centuries and its situation to-day. It then faced, according to Kirsopp Lake (as already quoted), paganism, Gnosticism, and uninstructed Christianity; it is now facing industrialized materialism, self-sufficient science, and the formalized Christian mind. The differences in detail are, of course, enormous. Then Christianity was an unrecognized minority, untested and incompletely organized. Now it is entrenched in two thousand years of history, splendidly organized, more than ample in resource and with a pride-filled power to command.

The opposing forces have also gained in strength. Paganism did not begin to possess the power which our present interlocking system of industry and finance, with all their attendant train of vested interests, possesses. Self-sufficient science has a force Gnosticism never had. That was cloud-built; but science is the massive accumulation of mercilessly self-disciplined investigation, proud of its power to know, humble in its willingness to be taught. It has its own vision of a law-controlled order whose last secret it may some day surprise, whose most subtle forces it may put at our service.

The Christian and the scientific mind

This situation is a commonplace of present-day thought, and a superabundance of modern literature is just now dealing with it. There is among the clear-visioned a great confidence that science cannot reach and dissolve the foundations of faith, but is on the contrary to supply faith the

material for its great enrichment. But the inherited Christian mind does not fall in easily with the scientific mind. Still less does it fit in with the philosophies which lie behind science and reduce us to highly complicated machines, with an estate made more difficult by our power to dream that we are not. Such a philosophy as this empties life and the universe of every element of spiritual reality, and instead of committing us to God, commits us sadly to the fateful necessities of the vast drive of the cosmic order.

Christianity is the contradiction of this along every sector of its front. The issues thus involved go very deep. There are profound differences of opinion as to the outcome, but even among the most confident there is an uneasy feeling that just now we are going through the dark. Doubt has hitherto been merely negative and critical; it has now become positive and constructive with a power confidently to offer its own structures and explanations. The searchers of the sky and the soul, who are examining all inherited human confidences with a merciless detachment, have already gone very deep. Those who maintain the "everlasting reality of religion" are searching for their impregnable foundation. Between them all a deal of dust has been raised and many seemingly steadfast things shaken. Christianity is more deeply involved than any other religion, because Christianity is on the most exposed and hotly contested sector of this ultimate front; it is involved in Western science, Western philosophy, and Western materialism, and every wing of the Christian army has its own lesser but trying entanglements.

Roman Catholicism is entangled with ideas of authority, sacerdotalism, and general interpretations of history crucially open to question. Protestantism is entangled with ideas about the sufficient authority of the Bible or, more accurately, about the infallibility of the Bible, which are not standing up well under examination. And Christianity generally has an established support in the supernatural, which makes it particularly vulnerable to the drive of science with its vast assumptions of unfailing law and unbroken order.

But other religions, too, have given their own hostages to

fortune and, if our humanity should eventually become persuaded that our moral freedom is an illusion, our moral responsibilities but word patterns with which we decorate the impassive drive of a mechanistic order, our prayers but the burdens of our spirits poured out into the void, and our spirits themselves but the delusions of illusion, an ultra-liberal Christianity will fare no better than devout conservatism.

The tactical weakness of religious liberalism

Indeed, the ultra-rational and liberal religious are more involved to-day than the conservative entrenched in tradition. This may be because they have gone out to meet the attack instead of staying in the trenches and it might be, also, because they have surrendered their own proper weapons, and are trying to fight with the weapons of the opposing forces and on a terrain chosen, so to speak, by the enemy. If religion maintains itself against science, it will maintain itself by the use of its own weapons, the choice of its own terrain and the assertion of its own authority. I venture to believe that, in the long run, these will be seen to possess a power beyond anything which can be brought against them. The roots of religion are in the region, to which what is most distinctive in our humanity is native, and the deeper we dig down into ourselves the more persistently we find all the branching spread of them.

We need not fear that approach to religion which finds the beginning of it in what is oldest and most persistent in human nature. Religion is none the less religious because we think we know the psychology of it, or because we find it mothered by the oldest of our longings and fathered by the most arresting of our fears.[1] The road we are presently going to take to reestablish the everlasting reality of religion among us, as far as it shall need reëstablishing, is not through the stars but through ourselves. Our homeland is still under skies whose majestic constellations mean no more and no less, as far as the actual business of life is concerned, than they meant to those who first saw the Great Bear crouching in the north, or belted Orion coming up out of the sea.

[1]See Martin's *The Mystery of Religion* for a suggestive approach along this line.

Life is still unchanged though the stars have grown distant

I do not see why we should allow the stars to crowd us out of the universe, or allow the dimensions of the space which contains them to dwarf us too much. After all we are weighing and measuring the stars; they are not weighing and measuring us. Life is still a lonely enterprise demanding comradeship. If our spirits were so alien to every other reality, as some among us would have us believe, then their very alien quality is one more testimony to the fact that science has not said the last word about the human enterprise. If they are not alien, if there is something akin to us and from which we are derived, then religion still has everything it had before—but vaster.

I

The Christian mind is shaken

Meanwhile we are shaken and, while the protagonists of faith and an idealistic philosophy are doing the best they can to find changed foundations for faith and justification for idealism, Christianity generally has been consolidating its position in the human order. It may for the time seem a retreat and yet, like other famous retreats, prove in the end to have been only a falling back for a more solid advance. Besides it is really an advance—an advance upon what is oldest and most sustaining in Christian life. Christianity was called "the way" before it was called anything else. It was always righteousness and sanctified human relationship. Jesus planted it not only in the mind, but in the affections, and He made the doing of His teachings the test and revelation of their truth. The first recovery of reality is always in the field of action.

Theology has become again and again in the history of the making of the Christian mind a dangerous detachment from reality. Christianity has really kept the road through its practical force. It has always been practical enough, or at least ecclesiasticism has always been practical enough. The Church has generally known how to look after its own affairs. Anyone who misjudges the shrewdness of the ecclesiastical mind is in danger of paying dearly for the mistake.

But ecclesiastical Christianity has been strangely slow in considering the general interests of our humanity from the viewpoint of humanity itself. An epigram is a two-edged thing and the more spacious it is, the more likely it is to be two-edged. But it is safe to say that the churches generally and for long periods have assumed that humanity was made for the Church and not the Church for humanity. This temper is, at least, as old as the founder of Christianity who had occasion to observe and reproach it and who was also, among other things, crucified because He took humanity's side against the then existing Church. Christianity is using the road Christ Himself used, as it seeks to find Him "where cross the crowded ways of men."

Jesus dealt with men in human relationship

The mind of Christ dealt with human beings in human relationship. His spiritual passion, for all the reach and splendour of it, lay bright and warm across our piteous humanity. No matter what key you find to explain the mind of Jesus Christ, this is true. Christianity was slow to lose sight of this; indeed, it never did lose sight of it, but, as we have seen, all the forces which made the militant Church of the Third and Fourth centuries and succeeding centuries combined to subordinate the mind of Jesus to more formal elements which, up to our time, have dominated the Christian mind.

It would be possible to maintain that the mind of Jesus, as revealed in the Gospels has had, in great ranges of historic Christianity, less influence upon the conduct of life than the mind of Mohammed upon Mohammedanism, or Confucius upon Chinese Ethics. This is a depressing conclusion; I honestly wish it could not be maintained. It was not so to begin with.

Christianity began in humane comradeship

The loving way of Christians with one another was early noted in the pagan world, and became a force to win the lonely and socially unconsidered in the Empire to the Christian Church. Christians did bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. They were charitable, mutually sympathetic; they upheld the simplicities and tenderness of life. If the Church at Rome lived out a quarter of that to which

Paul exhorted them in the twelfth chapter of Romans, there could have been no other group in the Empire of the same richly humane spirit. Early Christianity had nothing but its moral and spiritual force to humanize its world. Its channels of influence were the apologies and sermons of its leaders, through which it was defended and explained, the example of the Christians themselves and their charity toward their neighbours.[2] They had no political force and no social responsibility; they had no weapons for defense except their power to suffer, and still to suffer, and wear down opposition by the patient tenacity of martyrdom. It was a costly way, but the only way in which they could win against paganism, and it lay directly in the line of the teaching of Jesus Christ.

A minority religion with no force except the force to endure may take what Nietzsche calls "slave morality" and make it the morality of regnant and self-respecting souls, who, instead of being slaves, are the freest under the stars. But the real test of a religion is what men do with it in the mass, and not what they do with it in their individual relationships, and that test came to Christianity from the Fourth Century on. Christianity did establish, and quite from the first, the two conditions of humane Christian growth: first, the value of the individual and, second, what H. S. Nash calls "the social conscience."

The emergence of individual values

It is difficult to separate the action and reaction of these two conceptions. They are naturally older than Christianity. The deepening sense of the value of the individual and his responsibility for his own destiny has been so often traced through the Old Testament as to make it unnecessary to do it here, but the Old Testament emphases are upon the moral responsibility of the individual, and the ways in which the books of God's Judgment Day are kept in terms of individual destiny and desert. None of these Old Testament positions strongly assert the worth of the individual against the massive interests of society, or go so far as to make him either the cornerstone

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[2]Schmidt, *The Social Results of Early Christianity*, pp. 305 *et seq.*

upon which the whole human structure is builded, or else what the whole human structure is built to shelter. Jesus did do that.

II

Jesus shows a supreme concern for the individual

One cannot "feel" the whole temper of His teaching, without finding in it a supreme concern for the individual lives of weary and heavy-laden human folk. He maintains human values against the tyrannies of institutions and traditions, against pride and hard-heartedness, against the folly and fault of men themselves. He teaches men to value themselves, supporting it all with the assurance of the living care of God for the least of all His children.[3] Now that was a commandingly new note in the world of Jesus' time. The stoic felt strongly the supremacy of moral values. He made as much of conscience as we are inclined to make nowadays—and sometimes more. He matched his unconquerable soul against the drive of the world, with no defense but his pride and self-sufficiency. The stoic was an egotist in a subtle and baffling way. He was not an egotist in his demands, he was an egotist in his defiances.

All this combined to give a Roman morality, even at its best, a hard way with human folk which the military discipline of an empire, organized for conquest, strengthened. His empire, the Roman believed, justified the cost of it, and the cost of it was enormous. There is from all the hinterlands of Roman imperialism such a drainage of blood and tears, as Dante saw in the dismal river which fell from level to level in the *Inferno*. The Roman fell back upon his philosophy or upon nothing. His maxims were more generous than his conduct.

Philosophy and pity

The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, noble and austere as they are, centre very largely about himself. "Life," he says, "is a warfare and a strange sojourn." And it is a man's business to live "supe-

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[3]See Clarke, *The Ideal of Jesus* for a strong chapter on this aspect of Jesus' teaching.

rior to pains and pleasures, doing nothing without a purpose . . . nor feeling the need of another man's doing or not doing anything." Stoicism was willing enough to share its philosophy with other men, but it shared little pity with them and showed little tenderness. Mortality, with all its lights and shadows, is a brief experience to be uncomplainingly lived through. Men must suffer and be strong.

The mind of Jesus was rich in pity

Christianity lived and moved in another atmosphere. The teachings of Jesus are luminous with pity, and His sense of the sad fortune of humanity is a Cross upon which He was crucified before He was crucified on a Cross of wood. There is abundant testimony how the first Christians found in their fellowship with one another a quality of human consideration which then existed nowhere outside of Christianity. This quality of human consideration began to create a relatively new force, the social conscience. Nash traces step by step Christian conceptions out of which the social conscience emerged.[4] The individual man was clearly defined. He was called "soul." "In this definition was stored up a great stock of potential rights for the downmost man."

The ideal of the Kingdom

Christianity brought to the world the ideal of a divine issue of the human enterprise—a tremendous force. The unity of God involved the unity of all classes of men. (Christian thought usually makes this more glowing and says that the fatherhood of God implied the brotherhood of man.) The sense of sin made all men equal and broke down social aristocracies. The idea of the Kingdom of God, gradually transformed, furnished a splendour of social idealism and dreams to live and die for. The clear idea of duty became insistent. Institutions were more and more conceived of as ways of realizing human values, and out of all this emerged the social conscience, concerned first of all for humanity, and charged with a force to make men at once free and self-realizing subjects of the Kingdom of God.

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[4]Nash, *The Genesis of the Social Conscience*, p. 2 *et seq.*

III

The early social services of Christianity

But all this is only a massive frame into which to set the slow processes of the transforming centuries. Dr. James Orr names six gains which Christianity registered within the first one hundred years: a new spirit of active charity, a new ordeal of moral purity, purification of the family, the elevation of woman, the amelioration of the condition of the slave and the consecration of labour.[5] These are tremendously leavening influences; give them time enough and let them carry all that they involve and sooner or later society will be changed.

Before the Fourth Century Christianity did its work without any State support and often bitterly opposed by the State. But it did perfect its own discipline and develop its own standards of conduct. The glowing injunctions of the twelfth chapter of Romans are one thing in their ideal imperative; building them into life and adjusting them to all the trying ways of human fellowship is another matter.

The idea of law as the great moral imperative began to reassert itself. The Old Testament gained on the New. The law of love grew dim, naturally enough. Love needs time to recast either society or the soul and ripen its fruits of fellowship and goodness; law promises so quick a return. The Romans who began to take the Church in hand believed in law and discipline. Obedience to the Church supplanted the passion for the Kingdom and when the State did become the instrument of the Church, there was a fitting spirit ready to use it.[6]

Social imperial legislation

Imperial decrees worked in both ceremonial and humanitarian directions. In the Fourth Century the observance of Sunday was officially decreed and then "the use of prayers for the army, the abolition of crucifixion, the encouragement of the emancipation of slaves, the discouragement of infanticide, the prohibition of licentious and cruel rites, and the prohibition of gladi-

[5] *Christ and Civilization*, p. 227.

[6] Hall, *History of Ethics Within Organized Christianity*, Chap. III.

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torial games."[7] The general course of legislation during this century reveals a growing sympathy for the weak, the poor, and the unfortunate. Over against this must be set the growing spirit of intolerance, and the sometimes unspeakably harsh ways in which Christian factions dealt with one another during the stormy period of the doctrinal controversies. There was a tragically balanced give and take of persecution. Great bishoprics of the East dyed their doings deeply red in the blood of their ecclesiastical enemies.[8]

This is a dark shadow on a picture which had shadows enough, with here and there a brightening gleam of light which began to shine too late. Dill draws a strong account of the hopeless confusion into which the imperial administration had fallen and names, one by one, the forces which drove the Empire to its doom, but adds "the imperial government was probably never so anxious to check abuses of administration or so compassionate for the desolate and suffering as in the years when its forces were being paralyzed."[9] And he documents this statement with illuminating illustrations.

The influence of the Church in the dark ages

With the fall of the Empire the Church lost any power it might have had to assert its humanity through the machinery of the State and began to develop its own machinery of alleviation. The Church met all the dissolving influences of the time, and especially the excessive individuality of the Teuton, with its own strong sense of corporate life. All the elements which eventually created European civilization acknowledged the power of Christianity to bring men together with some sense of mutual responsibility and some slowly emerging sense of brotherhood and common destiny. The great theologies of the Church, and especially the theology of St. Augustine, with its power to break the pride of any man and cast him suppliant and helpless upon the mercy of

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[7]Quoted from Dean Stanley, *Christ and Civilization,* p. 269. Schmidt fills in these bare generalizations with a wealth of detail which would give colour to this account, if one could use them.

[8]Duchesne, *The Early History of the Church,* Vol. III, p. 221.

[9]*Roman Society—Last Century of the Western Empire,* pp. 278 *et seq.*

God, curbed the arrogance of fresh and conquering races. Some vision of a spiritual society in which all men are contained was never quite lost, though it was often sadly obscured.

The Church is hampered by its environment and its inconsistency

The Church was the one continuing thing in a world in which everything else was ended. It became the commanding spiritual and moral influence under which new societies were organized. It gained its own very great advantages through this long process but it served society at the same time. It could for a long while do no more than insist upon simple things. It safeguarded, a little, the sanctity of life in a time superbly careless of the sanctity of life. It made chastity a virtue. It set its force against slavery. But as in an earlier time it undid a considerable part of the humane good it sought to do by its persecutions, and its willingness to let the State deal fatally with those whom the Church handed over to its penalties, as long as no blood was shed. A heart-breaking cruelty was often concealed under this merciful injunction. Fire does not shed blood.

IV

By the end of the Fourteenth Century slavery was finished, though serfdom remained, and here again the Church was inconsistent, being slower than society generally to liberate the serf. The Church was generous in the redemption of captives; it was the only agent of charity in a time which demanded an excess of charity. Whatever hospitals there were, were church hospitals. Christianity made a virtue of kindness to the leper, a greater virtue of poverty and the unworldly life of the monasteries.

The Church and war in the Middle Ages

A Church which launched the Crusades to bleed Europe white for two hundred years can hardly be said to have done much for peace. The "Truce of God" which forbade fighting on holy days and discouraged private wars was something, but not a great deal. War was possibly made a little more kind, if war ever can be kind, and was idealized, if war can be

idealized, by the really noble conception of chivalry. One may fairly recognize that the religious idealism of the Middle Ages made war a more fair and considerate enterprise than the nations are now making of it. Whether this was a gain or loss to the ideal of peace, is a matter for debate.

The Church and labour—the guilds

Mediæval industry organized itself in guilds, and these guilds were any number of things which to-day have fallen apart and found widely separated expression. They instructed an apprentice in his chosen craft; they made industry a kind of family affair with the apprentice one of the family; they humanized the relation of employer and employee or else effaced it; they met the social needs of their members with a humane and understanding help. They succoured the living and buried the dead and gradually accumulated great endowments which were later lost, if they were not kept to dine London merchants.

They invested industry with romance and made good craftsmanship sacred; they built and wove and hammered and carved lovely things, which are now the treasures of old cities and new museums. They were always associated with the Church in the most intimate and constant way. It would be impossible to disentangle their fascinating life of the guilds from the sanction of the Christian religion. I should say, they gave a far more consistent industrial exposition to the Christian spirit than Twentieth Century industrialism—which is one secret of their intimate association with the Church. There was no essential conflict between what they were doing and what the Church asked them to do.

Any social growth has, of course, such deep and tangled rootings as to make it impossible to follow any one single formative force through, without allowing for the give and take of countless other influences. One's interpretation of history depends a good deal upon what one sets out to find. The historian who believes Christianity to have been the one humanizing and controlling influence between the fall of the Roman Empire and the Reformation can make out a suffi-

ciently good case; but he will have to deal with his facts fairly and debit official Christianity with a good deal which was positively wrong, as well as crediting it with a very great deal which was positively right.

We do need to remember in any criticism of the social force of Christianity in any period, that Christian idealism never has its perfect way with society. It has to work through its own entanglement in actual condition. It has to share its sovereignty with rival powers. It has slowly to subdue to its own spirit reluctances of human nature, and ways of human action old and regnant before the Cross was planted on Golgotha.

History is never made by any one single thing. The changing mind and vision and whatever of social conscience there was in the Europe of the Middle Ages—along with the interplay of race, the wisdom and the foolishness of kings and prelates, economic interest, and the force of life itself—all combined to give colour and quality to their world and their time. But the Christianity of the Latin Catholic Church was certainly the controlling influence in Europe for a thousand years on all the idealistic side. In a large and constant way that influence was on the side of a humane development of social life. This is about the conclusion the specialist reaches, though even the specialist is a little apt to fall back upon generalities without documenting his conclusions as carefully as one could wish.

Mediæval Christianity an influence without a social programme

Christianity did whatever it did through the gradual leavening of the social mind and not through a social or humane programme clearly conceived and consistently followed. Such programmes are the peculiar creation of our own time. They represent society grown acutely self-conscious and I wonder if society ever grows acutely self-conscious until it has also grown old and a little weary. A strong new society is very much more apt to act in vigorous and more or less unconsidered ways for present goods than to consider the far future or analyze its own motives.

V

The Reformation releases new forces

A new world came in with the Reformation. Very likely what was changing the world made the Reformation and we should have to look deeper for the controlling forces, upon which an old order was carried in stormy and dissolving ways toward new issues. One has to take very great care in arguing from cause to effect, especially when there are so many causes and so many effects. One may justly call the Reformation an adventure in religious liberty, but the passion for liberty had been long maturing in a changing human spirit fretted by archaic and rigid forms and once that passion was released it swept the new faith and the old world along with it. But since Protestantism was the creation of the freedom-seeking forces, it has been more closely identified with the vast issues which have followed their release than the old Church.

The Reformation intensified the national spirit on both sides the line. After the Reformation a nation had one thing more—as if there were not already enough—to distinguish it. It was Protestant Germany as against Catholic France, or Protestant England as against Catholic Spain, but generally Protestantism reënforced the national spirit the more strongly. The influence of the Reformation upon the development of the nationalistic spirit in England is beyond debate. Shakespeare's passionate apostrophy to England:

> "This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> This precious stone set in the silver sea,"

is a new note in poetry. Poets have always loved their own lands; Dante loved Italy and made a noble passage of his love. But Shakespeare repeats, in his liturgy of patriotism, something of the fateful music of the waves and the winds which de-

stroyed the Spanish Armada. That consciousness of power and pride and dear-bought independence which enriches the meaning of any fatherland for its children, and has been so dominant a note in poetry for three hundred years now, has behind it something the Reformation and all that went along with the Reformation combined to create. There has been ever since an association of religious passion and patriotic passion, a force to be reckoned with.

The Reformation and democracy

The reformed churches of the Calvinistic type undoubtedly trained their adherents in self-government. Common folk had possessed little voice in the administration of affairs, but here was a chance for any man to have his say, even though he spoke first about so small a matter as the choice of an elder in his church—a small matter but pregnant with great issues; there were the germs of republics and democracies in it. There is an interlocking support in any long-established system; if it gives way in one position the whole begins to be in danger.

The authority of the Church had supported the authority of the king, but when a man learned to look after his soul and his church, he began to reach for his state, and bring to his embattled passion for political liberty some spiritual and mystic quality gained from his religion. His religion made liberty holy, feeding the passion in which he fought and died for it. He made a religion of his patriotism and a patriotism of his religion. These two great forces have wrought together in fashioning the fabric of representative government, since the Reformation.

The Theocratic ideal

But he was God's man before he was the State's man. He had some deep sense of a state whose real ruler was God, whose laws were the will of God written down on human statute books. This has made the whole adventure of democracy holy and invested it with a mystic quality, which has heretofore been the strongest safeguard of self-government. As far as we have lost it, and we are beginning to lose it, free government generally has suffered enormously. No mere prudential considerations can ever take the place of it. When self-government

ceases to be a holy thing and becomes merely a political method it not only loses what makes it august and worth the cost; it is very likely to become the inefficient play of competitive selfishness. A state needs something to keep it from being simply a glorified opportunity to make money or an instrument for "the will to power."

VI

Luther and the peasants revolt

The new religious order born of the Reformation took different social, political, and economic lines. It did not immediately satisfy the half-conscious, half-unformed passion for a happier, human order from which it drew not a little of its support. Luther, by one of the tragic ironies of history, was led almost immediately to throw his whole great force against the demand of the German peasant for a most elementary measure of social justice. He was placed in a cruel position. He had to choose between the support of the governing classes in Germany or the support of an embattled peasantry, who could never have returned him anything more than a dumb gratitude. He chose the support of the feudal group and went out of his way to approve the severities with which the peasants were put down. His choice may have been tragically necessary; the spirit he showed was not. None of the reformers were eager to be looked upon as social radicals. John Calvin took a very great deal of pains to assure the French monarchy that his Reformation was both law-abiding and loyal.

Calvinism and the State

Luther's violent partisanship did much to dim the splendour of the morning which had risen about him. He began as the spokesman of a passionate national spirit; he ended as the dependent of the German princes. What was really lost then in Germany has actually never been recovered, as far as the German-Lutheran Church is concerned. It is only fair to say, however, that Luther denounced the capitalism of his time as unrestrainedly as he denounced the struggling low folk of his

time. But between these two extremes there was little constructive.[10]

The associations of Calvinism were political rather than social to begin with. Calvin believed in the Church as the soul of the State. He believed in the State as the body of the Church and God as the Lord of them both. He did not begin the way of using the State to enforce the will of the Church; mediæval Catholicism had long been doing that—in fact, it began with the Christian Roman emperors. But he certainly gave definite intensity to the conception. He reached for the moral and religious habits of the citizens of Geneva; he reached for them down to their last detail; he used the corporate force of the city for his tool.

Calvin wanted a city of God and, if he could not get it from the inside, he would get it from the outside. The Puritan wing of Protestantism inherited all this, carried it from Old England into New England, and the remnants of it still linger among us. It has been on the whole a doubtful expedient; it has substituted compulsory mass morality for all the quiet changing of the minds and wills of our humanity, which is the only solid basis for any morality.

Protestantism became too rigid all at once. One could maintain with fair force that, because of its inherited dependence upon mass moral control, it has never taken the pains in the creation of free and self-sufficient moral character which it ought to have taken, though that statement could be challenged and certainly should be qualified. But there are outstanding illustrations of the fallacy of a too great dependence upon law-enforced morality in our own time, which illustrate the complexity of the whole situation.

John Knox plans wisely

John Knox bequeathed to Scotland a far-sighted programme of social reform which locked up to education. He was the first of the reformers to anticipate a ladder of schools with its first rung at the foot of every child in Scotland, with the top of it opening out, through the universities, upon the high-

[10] H. T. Andrews, *Christ and Civilization*, p. 345.

disciplined intellectual life of a great-minded nation. He hoped to use the endowments of the old Scotch Church for the new Scotch education. The crown and the nobles got the endowments but Scotland kept the ideal, and has realized it in a way to make her history luminous.

VII

Protestantism and economic development

The Protestantism of the Reformed churches has influenced the economic development of the last three hundred years in a way none of the reformers ever foresaw. The Reformation, as we have seen, secularized religious life. It brought men and women out of the monasteries and back into the full current of social life but it limited the very life it secularized. It became unduly austere, fearful of pleasure, doubtful for a long time of art. It left to the devout very little but religion and labour. It left them home life, of course, and the old and dear human interests which it enriched rather than impoverished, but it made life too narrow for all that, as if there was nothing for a man to be except a good churchman, a good family man, a good laborious citizen, and a kind neighbour.

Now, what these leave out is difficult enough to define but tremendously real. They leave out the art of a rich and many-sided life, finding its satisfactions in beauty, social refinements, engaged in occupation with the reasonably blameless affairs of this world, and, in some deep, true sense, finding the joy of living in the many-sidedness of life. A hard-driven business man to-day is a fairly good illustration of what a man gains and loses who takes this road of the four virtues, takes it at a driving pace, sees little of the roadside as he goes on, and is not altogether too sure of where he is going. Thrift became a fifth virtue—and these five virtues between them began to create wealth. But they could never have created wealth without raw material, and the shaping of circumstance furnished them material enough.

Modern industrialism comes into action

All the elements which have combined to create our modern industrial civilization began, one by one, to come into action. The American continent offered these five virtues a field for their exploitation or their development, whichever you please, so fabulously rich as to make figures dizzy. The gold of the Americas supplied a basis for finance. Civilization correlated iron and coal, made the coal, smelt the iron, and began an iron age which presently became a steel age and a copper age, an aluminum and rubber age and all the different kinds of an age we are to-day. The genius of invention was released to begin its astounding magic, and there was always labour and thrift to work and to save, and to work and to save again. New forms of industrial organization followed and pioneered down this marvellous road. Increased populations responded to the stimuli of food and work. The humanity which had built the machine looked up from its looms and forges to find itself dangerously in the way of becoming the servant of its own machinery.

VIII

Industrialism creates the situations Christian humanitarianism is now taking in hand

This is the situation which Christian humanitarianism has begun to take in hand. The Christianity which has taken this in hand has, as I have already said, been greatly changed. It has ceased to be other-worldly, partly through the dimming of its visions, partly through the intensification of its worldly interests; it has lost a little its sustaining confidences in the unseen and eternal and, meanwhile, the seen and the temporal have become evident, commanding, rewarding. Yet there is still, at the heart of Christianity, the sense of a commission to possess and discipline the world and subdue it to the will of God and the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Christianity has for the time, in considerable regions, given over the hope of escaping from the world. It has determined instead to make the world its own and in a Christian way.

The light of Christian responsibility falls on the socially disinherited

Its old instinctive tenderness, its divine sense of spiritual value, its passion for the soul, are all reasserting themselves against the forces which deny them. It is as if all the great Christian lights of all the great Christian centuries have begun to focus upon a child at a loom or a miner in a black, dripping gallery, or the disinherited poor of crowded city slums. This same light has begun to focus with a sad, searching power upon trampled battlefields; it does not love the reflection of itself from bayonet knives. Christian idealism wants another voice than the staccato of the seventy-five; it wants other wings than the wings of a bombing plane.

It would need a book in itself to follow this out in detail. Almost every communion has its social creed. Federated Protestantism has its social creed which as many things have combined to create as were in action at Nicea and Constantinople. In the most inclusive way, social Christianity is seeking a social and economic machinery through which the Christian spirit may act freely, positively, and in which it will be at home.

There is really passionate desire to exalt human values, rescue the forgotten, save the submerged, adorn humanity with a new beauty, and free industry from unhuman competition. A strong desire for plain social justice is in action. Practical ends sought include the fairer distribution of wealth, with the humane advancement that would carry with it. All this is being sought through legislation, the creation of public opinion and the influence of the Church upon industrial leaders.

Effect of all this on the Christian mind

The reaction of this social passion upon the Christian mind is more positive than anything since the Reformation. It has brought the Church back to the entire range of human life, and it is bringing the Communions nearer together. The Protestant churches feel keenly the weakness of their divided estate in the face of the massive unity of materialism. The Protestant mind is becoming increasingly corporate. The whole thoughtful Christian mind is sadly sensible that we have

reached the limit of individual Christian development, unless we can create a Christian order for the individual to develop in; it sees limitations to its timeless growth in the present order, unless it can open the road to new summits of spiritual realization. It finds itself confronted by a rebirth of paganism—the gods and goddesses of old Olympus have built new temples for themselves in many storied cities and, having set up their altars, begun to demand their sacrifices.

The sensitive Christian spirit has become conscious of its deep entanglement in the very order it assails. The pain and perplexity of that consciousness is felt in all Christian teaching and preaching. Christianity is facing one of the most difficult tasks in its history—and its vision is not yet clear. The essentially unchristian elements in our present world order are as unified and compactly disciplined as the hostile empire of two thousand years ago, and the situation is far more subtle. Then the lines between the Christian and the unchristian were clean drawn for any man to see. Now the confronting lines run through households and social situations. They penetrate industrial organization and political inheritance. They trace their invisible frontiers through church and the souls of the combatants themselves. Christianity does not find its most menacing resistances in a wholly alien order; it finds them seamed through the entire society of which it itself is a part, and in strategic positions to stop the Christian offensive before it is fairly begun.

Christianity may discover anew, as it has not known since the days of Constantine, the searching meaning of the Cross before it has made the Cross triumphant.

IX

Various aspects of Christian humanitarianism

Christian humanitarianism, as it is in action to-day, is thus a very complicated affair. It is in some ways the substitution of practical programmes for doctrine and even devotion; it is an escape from doubt and spiritual bewilderment. A

St. Paul in his more critical moments might call it a substitute of good works for a mystic life hid with Christ in God. Plenty of people who are by no means St. Pauls, call it a busy meddling of the Church with what is none of the Church's business, at the cost of true religion.

It is certainly far enough removed from the devout and worshipful and other-worldly life, which the Christianity of the last two generations inherited from all its past; it has displaced the prayer meeting by the "forum" and given a changed character to preaching. The social problem and not the soul furnishes conference themes. It is undoubtedly in danger of either forgetting, or losing, very precious aspects of the religious life.

But there is another and finer side to it than that. It is something Christianity simply could not help doing if it is to be true to the mind of the Master; it lies squarely in the way of Christian advance and there is no avoiding it. This new Christianity, for it is new, may be a long time in realizing its dreams though, everything considered, it has already made marvellous headway. But as nearly as one may anticipate the future, the issue is not in doubt.

Militant social Christianity has three enormous reënforcements. It has its own essential spirit which has, when everything is said and done, continually gathered force and fineness; it was not created to be arrested now. Militant social Christianity has also the reënforcement of the very situation in which all that opposes it is beginning to find itself. There is in many quarters a deepening despair of the future of our civilization. Part of this is undoubtedly due to the reactions which have followed the war, but part of it goes deeper.

The weakness of materialism an aid to Christianity

The far-visioned see a self-destructive force in unqualified materialism. They have plenty of cases to document the contention that unhumanized greed contains the deep elements of its own undoing. An industrial civilization motivated by avarice, driven by competition, careless of the human values, has no power to endure. The por-

tentous elements in our present civilization might destroy themselves in some one world conflict, where all the forces of destruction were made fatal by the boundless resource of our civilization. Or else such a civilization might grow world-weary and lose its power triumphantly to live and vigorously to act, so fretting itself out in some twilight of the gods of finance and factory.

The supreme alternatives of history which civilizations have from time to time been called upon to face, seem to be shaping themselves anew. There is no saving alternative to the way of this present world, so the Christian mind maintains, save the way of Christ, and there are not wanting signs that this present world is beginning to feel the force of that contention. It is beginning to doubt itself which is one secret of its touchiness; material civilization is suffering from a fear complex. This also is a reënforcement of militant Christian humanitarianism. Finally in this and through it all, Christianity is beginning to rediscover the mind of Jesus Christ.

X

The rediscovery of the mind of Christ

This rediscovery of the mind of Christ completes the long cycle of the making of the Christian mind. That was what Christianity began with, it is what Christianity will end with, and ending with that it will never end at all. The mind of Christ has never wholly been lost, or else Christianity would long ago have itself been lost; but it has been too much overlaid. It has been overlaid by subtle doctrines, necessary in their time, but now losing their force. It has been overlaid by the imperial pride of an imperial church. It has flowed down into the channels of mysticism and sacramentarianism, taken deep underground ways remote from human interests and understanding. It has been ravelled and undone in arid intellectualisms; it has been forgotten in the competitions of rival communions; it has been surrendered to the interests of this world. And, just as always, we have only to turn the pages

of our Gospels to discover it, luminous, lovely, fragrant, infinitely wise, savingly divine.

It is the way of God, and the need of man; it is ageless truth, the secret of the survival of society, the key to the fulfillment of all our hopes—and all in thirty printed pages. We have missed it because it was so near; we have failed it because it is so high and so hard. Christianity has always been taking this or that short cut in By-Path Meadow, because it would not breast the hill Difficulty. Time and change and circumstance have always been driving it back upon the highway of its King.

All the forces, worthy or unworthy, which have begun to focus Christian endeavour upon humanitarian ends, have driven Christianity back upon its original charter, its true point of departure and the goal it was created to reach—the mind of Jesus Christ. Our social programmes may not be in the Gospels in detail. The Kingdom the Church sings and prays for may not be the Kingdom the Apostles expected; no matter, the substance and enabling principles of what Christianity is now seeking are in the mind of Jesus. Christianity is laying strong hold upon what is timeless and changeless in the mind of Christ; it is finding there a warrant for its humane passion; it is being rebaptized in His strong gentleness, His conquering patience, His terrible meekness; it is weighing the human enterprise in His scales; it is testing social gains by His values; it is subduing our methods to His method and to His spirit.

Strangely enough, and yet it ought not to be strange, the intellectually and spiritually perplexed in our time have found here a foundation upon which to build a home for their disquieted souls. It would seem as if the tides of certainty and authority have drawn back into the great deep, in order that the authority and truth of Jesus Christ might the more commandingly possess the coasts of human life thus left bare. As one tide has ebbed another tide is flooded in. The world's hope, the world's faith, the world's devotion have gathered about Jesus as never before. There is no land or race anywhere from which this tide is not setting in; this is not rhetoric, it is demonstrable fact.

XI

The road back to spiritual reality

This rediscovery of the mind of Jesus Christ is likely to do a vast deal more than validate and support the humanitarian passion of Christianity. It will furnish the road back into spiritual realities, back to God, back to the everlasting reality of religion and back to Christianity as the supreme revelation of the everlasting reality of religion. The Church found its way into doctrine and ecclesiastical power through the mind of Jesus to begin with; it was controlled by the necessities and understandings of its time. What it created as it went along was then alive and tremendously real. But what was alive then became a hallowed form, and what was tremendously real then became an inheritance, since treasured to save us the cost of finding out what is real for ourselves.

Christianity need not fear to go back to the beginning, if need be, and to become again an actual road builder. It will find the new road in many ways strangely like the old; it can often use the old road and make it new just by using it anew, for every road is new every time you use it. It should find in its new Pilgrim's Progress a good many way marks indicating what may helpfully be avoided, and a good many way marks also to show the right road. The highways of Christianity, like the highways across a continent, are determined by old, old contours created by the revelation of God, the needs of the human spirit, the timeless realities of the soul.

If a good deal which has heretofore seemed important shall be left behind, it may make no very great difference. Christianity has been due for some lightening of its baggage train for a long time. Essential human conservatism will keep it from being done too fast; the greater danger may be in doing it too slowly. The Christian mind of the future will use the materials of human experience and human knowledge as it has in the past. Otherwise it would walk abroad as a ghost. If it uses these with the mind of Jesus and subdues them to His spirit, the development of Christianity will be sure and un-

broken. And if this re-creative departure of Christianity should begin with human need, it will begin as Jesus Christ began and find its way to the old certainties.

Jesus Himself taught that the proof of the doctrine was in the doing. An age which has lost its sense of the reality of God through religious formalism, or the fascination of science, or the sheer murk of materialism, will find its road to what the mystic discovered in ecstasy, along the plain highway of loving duty. There is no need to try to explain this. It happens to be just one of the things which are so. If the roads to God were too far up in the air for a perplexed humanity to reach them, the Incarnation would have been in vain. That is what the creed-making centuries denied so strongly. But, by an unescapable spiritual necessity, the road which begins in loving service, followed through, ends in the vision of God.

It is not possible for the Church to take this road and miss the Cross; it will not need to set out to find the Cross; the Cross will find a Christianity which has made sacrificial service, in the spirit of Jesus Christ, the law of its life. It will also find the redemptive meaning of the Cross, as the redemptive meaning of the Cross has always been found, not in the definitions of a creed but in travail of the soul. It will find the Cross redemptive as it always has been and always will be; it will be taught to repeat hallowed assurances, "Who for us men and our redemption," with a confidence no doubt can shake.

CONCLUSION

It may be useful at the risk of some repetition to conclude this book with a summary of its contents. There has been an unavoidable crossing of lines throughout all its development; nothing, at least, will be lost in putting together in a brief way what has already been said. It has really been an attempt to trace the processes of Christian development and it assumes, of course, that there has been an essential development in Christianity, which has made the end of it richly different from the beginning.

The possible tests of essential Christianity

There are three possible tests of essential Christianity: what it was to begin with, what it is now, and the phases of its historical development. We may assume Christianity to have been from the first a complete and final deposit of truth. We have, then, only to find what truths Jesus Christ delivered to His apostles, and repeat it in our creeds; or what obedience He asked, and make it manifest in our lives. This persuasion has given direction to the whole Christian enterprise.

Every historic communion claims to embody and continue a true and necessary interpretation of the mind and ministry of Jesus. Every historic creed combines this interpretation with an authoritative statement of His person and the divine order of which He was a part. Every new communion justifies itself as a return to primitive Christianity. Every reformation is by these tests some recovery of what has been lost or overlaid in the original deposit of faith and practice. And according to this way of thinking Christianity of to-day, if it be true at all, is the Christianity of two thousand years ago.

There is, of course, and always has been, some recognition

of the principle of development. The Catholic Church has asserted a vaster claim here than most Protestant communions; it justifies its really great extensions of authority and belief by saying that they were implicit in the original deposit. It has never, according to its apologists, introduced anything which was not there to begin with, nor failed in any phase of its development to be true to its trust. It has been compelled, of course, to assume supremacies of authority and judgment, to validate what it has done and may hereafter do, but it maintains as the taproot of all its growth a content which never has been, and never can be, essentially increased or diminished.

The force of the Catholic position

Now there is a force in this contention which Protestantism has been slow to recognize or even to understand. A conception of a church, receiving an entirely sufficient revelation, capable through the many-sided wealth of it of a vast continuity of development, and possessing a sovereign authority and an infallible rightness to adjudicate the entire course of that unfolding, with the power of the keys to open this door and shut that, until its awesome judgments administer both the temporal and eternal, is a conception to master the imagination. No wonder the claim to a power like this, invested with the divine sanction and the spell of its greatness, has enthralled the centuries.

The Protestant position

Protestantism has taken another line. It was in the genesis of it very much more than an effort to reëstablish the Church in apostolic integrities and simplicities, but it believed itself to be doing just that. It was led, for the defense of all that it did, to oppose the authority of the Catholic administration with the authority of the Bible, and since the Bible was finished a long time before Protestantism began, the reform faith was compelled from the first to operate within a fixed territory.

It has suffered ever since from the rigidity of these self-imposed limitations. The right of private judgment in religion, being the real enabling clause of the Magna Charta of Protestantism, it is always being compelled to come to such terms as it can with the changing tempers and understandings

of changing times. And though it makes its accommodations slowly, it will always end by making them and always doubly hampered, once by the sheer difficulty of changing any deeply established religious order, and once by the want of any sufficient theory of its authority to make such accommodations.

Neither wing has been entirely consistent. The Roman Catholic has recognized and acted on the principle of development but it has narrowed the range of it to its own cultus, and has been historically wanting in a sufficient vision of the various operations of the spirit of God in the whole field of life and society. Protestantism does not theoretically recognize the principle of development but admits it under cover of practice.

I

But the development is there and it is the key to the understanding of Christianity in any phase of it or at any period in its history. The more rewarding approach to any religion is along the lines of its development. Every religion has taken to itself and its growth contributions from almost countless sources. Every religion has reflected changing environments and been greatly conditioned by the temper of its devotees. Every religion is in its entirety the formative force which created it and released it, the phases through which it has passed, and, if it be a living religion now, its present phase and forms.

No religion is finished until it is done, and it is not finished then. The real force of any religion is in its power to take over and saturate with its essential spirit whatever at any one time is capable of religious interpretation or direction, in its unfailing capacity to readjust itself to always fluid situations and subdue to its vision and understanding the shadows and splendours of the human enterprise.

The secret of the power of Christianity

The essential power of Christianity has always been in its steadfastness and its marginal elasticity. It has never as yet surrendered its essential assurances; it has continued its original deposit but it has taken into itself and subdued

to itself more elements than any other religion. The religions of the East have been incarnate in civilizations, habits and temperaments which the millenniums have hardly touched with change. The East is what it always has been. Hinduism and Buddhism have never faced an essentially altered challenge till the invasion of the Occident.

But Christianity has lived through the welter of the Western World. It has survived the entire dissolution of the civilization in which it began. It has possessed varieties of races, faced always fluid situations, lived in the same regions with self-assertive sciences and philosophies and in the end, penetrated them all because it has possessed so great a power to give and take. This wide range of accommodation, this many-gated openness to temperaments has secured its sovereignty.

Dr. McGiffert's formal statement

Dr. Arthur C. McGiffert has put a wealth of scholarship in two or three noble paragraphs as he tells us what forms Christian faith and experience have taken since Jesus walked His Palestinian ways.[1] "To the Apostle Paul, to Ignatius, and to thousands of believers since, Christianity means a religion of redemption, releasing men from the trammels of the world, of sin and of death, and giving them the power of an endless life.

"To Justin Martyr, to Pelagius, to Socinus, it meant a revelation of God's will, which we have abundant ability to obey if we choose, and obeying which we reap the fitting reward. To Clement of Alexandria, to Scotus Erigena, to F. W. Hegel, to speculative thinkers of every age, it has meant a philosophy of the universe, explaining the whence and the whither, the beginning and the end of all things. To the schoolmen both Catholic and Protestant it has meant the acceptance of a series of propositions supposed to contain final truth touching God and the universe. To St. Bernard and Fenelon and William Law, and to the mystics of all generations it has meant the transcendence of human limitations in oneness with the Divine. To St. Francis of Assisi and Thomas à Kempis and

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[1]These quotations are from a published address which I have mislaid since noting them and I can do no more than make general acknowledgment.

many a lovely spirit of our own and other days, it has meant the imitation of Christ in His life of poverty, humility, and love.

"To St. Cyprian and Augustine and countless Catholics, it has meant the one Holy Apostolic Church, an ark of salvation alone providing escape from eternal punishment. To Hildebrand and Innocent as to modern ultra-montanists, in general, it has meant the papal hierarchy, ruler of the nations of the earth. To Benedict of Nursia, to Boniface, the Saxon Apostle, to not a few missionaries of these latter days, it has meant a great civilizing agency raising whole peoples from ignorance to culture and humaneness. To the rationalists of the Eighteenth Century, it has meant the religion of nature, always one and unchanging, the worship of God and the pursuit of virtue. To a growing multitude of Christians of our own day, it has meant Humanitarianism, the service of one's fellows in the Spirit of Christ." And I may say directly that, though I came upon the address from which this is taken long after the plan of this book had quite completely shaped itself in my own mind, the thesis of the book is here.

II

Christianity a principle of spiritual life, but it has never been one single thing

Now if all this is true, there is a second way of testing and interpreting Christianity. It is not a deposit amplified; it is rather a principle of spiritual life—though any phrase which one used here would be misleading—which has grown and which, in its growth, has taken into itself contributory elements from all the sources which may enrich or influence the continuity of religious life through the centuries. If this be true, Christianity is no single stage of the manifold phases of its development; it is the historic totality of them, it is the entirety of contemporaneous Christian variety and emphasis, it is the pregnant prophecy of the future. They are, of course, continuing tests and controls. There are frontiers beyond which Christianity

ceases to be Christianity, but within these frontiers there is a more than continental range of religious experience.

The content of Christianity then is a deposit of its constituent centuries, but it is a vast deal more than a mere deposit, as if the substance of it were now a mere silt washed down by currents of thought and action and left to lie where it had been carried; Christianity is the vital continuity of all that it has ever been. There is a tenacious persistence in any social form. Society continues to-day, in one form or another, almost every phase of social development, just as we continue in our own minds the entirety of an inheritance older than the dawn man. But nowhere does Western Europe and America so continue in living form two thousand years of history as in the Christian Church. Imperial Rome is politically only a memory in the lands across which the lights and shadows of her power lay so long, but Imperial Rome lives in the Vatican and the provinces of her procurators are still bishoprics. Feudalism is only the shadow of a shadow politically, but the Church continues elements of the feudal age. Old superstitions have changed their form, but they endure.

The Creeds of the Fourth and Fifth centuries are recited in the Twentieth. Jewish hopes as old as Isaiah were texts for yesterday's sermons and we solemnly taught the Jewish cosmogony of a thousand years before Christ in yesterday's Sunday Schools.

Deeper still, those forms of religious realization rooted in persistent varieties of temperament are side by side in our pews to-day as they gave character to faith and worship a millennium ago. And nothing of this is dead and no part of it more formal than any other part. There are shifting emphases but one ineradicable persistence of elements. I do believe that there is not a doubt or a fear or a superstition or a splendour of faith which Christianity has ever sheltered which does not live somewhere among us to-day, as vividly entertained as ever before.

Here, in one form or another, is something before which science halts and reason abdicates, and when you say, "this at least is lost or vanquished," lo, it rises from its ashes.

III

Christianity inherited the Jewish Messianic hope and behind that the hope of our race

I have sought through the chapters of this book to trace the contours of the historic process through which all this has come to pass. We began with a consideration of the religious past which Christianity has directly continued, and elements older still which contributed to its power. It is directly in the line of Jewish Messianic expectation. It validated itself from the first by an appeal to the Hebrew prophets of whose expectations it believed, and believes itself, the fulfillment. But these prophecies were themselves the formulation of a great hope ripened and often modified, through the religious genius and the searching experiences of the Hebrew race. They had sorrow and defeat and captivity and exile and hope deferred for their background with an unconquerable faith in God's peculiar concern for them as a race. The Jewish hope thus became typical of humanity's vaster and vaguer hope, born of condition and experience, seeking for well-being and peace of soul. Christianity took unto itself all this content of human longing and has found its religious supremacy in its power to satisfy it.

The creative ministry of Jesus Christ

This inheritance of hope passed through the mind of Jesus, and more than through His mind. It passed through His person and His spirit and the historic circumstance and outcome of His life. There Christianity began and there are the controls of it. His disciples inherited His teaching, His spirit, and the circumstance and outcome of His life, and Christian history begins with what they did with their inheritance.

Once we are clear of the First Century and a half, going is plain enough, but there is room for great differences of opinion in interpreting the first two phases. This is partly due to different readings and datings of the Gospels and Epistles, partly due to the want of adequate documents for brief but important periods, and greatly due to our way of reading

back a full creedal content into the very beginning of the Apostolic Church.

Apostolic Christianity

But if we had lived among the apostolic group, and thought and felt and believed with them, we should have found Christianity a Messianic hope. We should have believed as they did that the expectation of the prophets, and the desire of the Jewish nation for a deliverer was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We should have searched the Scriptures as they did for passages to prove Jesus of Nazareth the Lord's Anointed, and being children of the time, as they were, we should have invested His Messiahship with a strange dramatic splendour.

We should have lived as they did also in daily expectation of the end of the age, the overthrow of Rome by celestial forces, and a new heaven and a new earth won through the wreckage of the old order. The evidence of all this is too plain to be ignored. The study continued then with the examination of Christianity as a Messianic hope.

Christianity becomes a response to the longing for spiritual deliverance

The first expectations of the Apostles were not fulfilled. The world went on in its old and constant fashion, and the devout could not always be looking toward the heavens, for the coming of their Lord. Christianity had to adjust itself to a going human order. There was, moreover, no principle of universal appeal in the gospel of the end of the age. The Greek loved life too well to want it ended; the Roman was too proud of his empire to wish it overthrown. If Christianity were to win the empire of Cæsar, it must take another line. The line it was to take was waiting for it in a Greek or Roman world which, beneath all its hard material forms, was profoundly moved by a longing for deliverance. The deliverance this sought took changing forms. It might be deliverance from sin, or the shadowed side of life, or from haunting restlessnesses, or else it was a hunger for some nearness to a saving, transforming God.

This longing expressed itself through the mystery religions. The old cults of Asia Minor lent themselves to it easily. Greece took it over in forms really alien to the sunny reasonable-

ness of Greek life and philosophy. Rome surrendered to the spell of it under the guidance of priests and priestesses from Egypt and the East. Here was longing as deep-rooted, as the ways in which it found satisfaction were tangled and shadowed. Christianity had only to offer more true and simple satisfaction than the mysteries to find a response which carried it triumphantly across the Empire. St. Paul, more than any other saint in the Apostolic Church, carried Christianity over into this region. In his ministry we may trace the transition from a Messianic hope to a religion of deliverance.

IV

It skirts a dangerous region and entrenches itself in its creeds

In its approach to the pagan religions Christianity skirted a dangerous region. The Second and Third centuries after Christ were marked by frontierless speculation about God and His way of reaching a world of matter, and the more reluctant clay of human nature. The thinkers of that time in their passion for the holiness of God separated Him by a measureless abyss from creation and its creatures, and bridged that abyss with a cloud-built structure of speculation. Heresies engendered in this murky region began to trouble the Church; the nature and person of Jesus became the focus of hot debate. The Church to save her faith and her separateness had to define her belief, and so set bounds to speculation. She thus became of necessity a creed-making church. She wrote down her faith in articles, and invested those articles with the sanction of her own God-given authority, and so went far toward making Christianity a creed-buttressed system of doctrine rather than a way of life. Christianity as doctrine, then, is its third phase.

Christianity becomes an Imperial church and a rich culture

Then Rome fell as an empire of temporalities, and was reborn as an empire of ecclesiastical administration. Old habits of government were given new names; provinces became bishoprics. The necessities of Church government, following lines made easy by centuries

of centralized command, created a Pope and a Papal Court with Rome for a capital and the timelessness of Rome to support the churches' august assertion of authority.

But this was only the containing form of something else. This Imperial church invested all her ways with the splendour of ceremonial which her noble buildings fittingly housed. And, being the one continuing thing in an age when everything else was falling away, she quickly became very old, and the residuary legatee of traditions, orders and lands. Whatever came into her possession was never thereafter lost, though many things were recast and renamed.

Christianity was no longer simple. It was not alone a faith, or an authority, or an organization; it was all these together and something more, asserting an imperial control over all human interests, and extending its domain beyond the grave. Christianity thus became in its next phase an Imperial Cultus.

V

It expresses itself through sacraments

One aspect of all this demands separate consideration. The Church developed a sacramental system and a sacramental ministry. This colourless statement covers one of the most significant and fascinating phases of historic Christianity. The sacraments became the Church's way of releasing the contrite sinner from his sin, and maintaining him in a godly, righteous and sober life. Her way of giving a timely significance to his supreme experiences and dismissing him with assured hope upon the great adventure of death.

An unique power is needed to subdue material things to the issues of spiritual destiny, and the Church first exercised and then formulated this power, making her priests and possessors of it by her own divine authority. By virtue of their properly endowed station, they absolved or excommunicated, they changed bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and repeated daily the piteous and assuring drama of the Crucifixion in the Mass.

The enabling power of the Latin Catholic Church

If you seek the enabling power of the Catholic Cultus, it is here, and in one fashion or another sacramentarianism has become an essential aspect of Christian administration, with an enormous effect upon liturgy, architecture, poetry, and a window by which to see the unseen through things of sense and time. We have, therefore, to consider Christianity as sacramentarianism.

In the end the mechanics of such an organization overlaid its spiritual values. The sense of any nearness of God in life was mediated through forms and agencies which seemed to the sensitive to be strangely wanting in any qualities which betokened the presence of God. An old way of approach to God having little need either of altars or of priests began to be rediscovered. There were here and there those who believed themselves to have found God through some immediate assurance of His presence; such as these took their own line, sometimes, in formal fidelity to the Church and sometimes with no concern for her Communions and Absolutions.

They called themselves mystics, and created a literature of confession and a way of self-discipline by which any who wished to take the trouble, which was by no means slight, might find God as they had found Him. Mysticism was never a phase of the Christian ideal in such a way that you could take the Church at any one time or place and call it entirely mystical; but mysticism has, in one form or another, been so distinct a content of Christianity as to make it quite right and necessary to give it a distinct consideration.

The Reformation

Mysticism among other things prepared the way for the Reformation. Grave abuses in the Latin Catholic Church stirred northern Europe to a protest, which ended in organic division. Changing social and economic conditions helped. Old forms were too rigid for a spirit demanding a freer expression. The right of private judgment in regions of faith asserted itself against old authorities, which kept the habit of authority without the religious and moral justification of it. The force of nationality, just beginning to quicken with pregnant possibilities, challenged Catho-

lic unity. And a German monk, with no intention, to begin with, of rewriting history, released forces still in action.

The changing status of the non-Catholic faith

In its later phases Protestantism is taking to widely diverse roads, being far more immediately responsive to the general movement of thought than the Roman Catholic Church; it reflects the critical and scientific temper of the time, and moves with diminishing certainty in the traditional regions of faith. The interests of this present world have slowly taken precedence over doctrinal interests, even though the churches stoutly maintain old confidences and use old forms of words.

The growing concern for Christian humanitarianism

The concern for an ideal social order and economic well-being of all the members of the State, which has attended the growth of democracy, has profoundly influenced the Christian mind. The ethical and social implications of the teachings of Jesus have become in a new way a commanding centre of interest. The age-old expectations of a redeemed world, which inspired the Jewish prophet, have taken a new form among us, and we seek under the leadership of Jesus a realization of the Kingdom of God, not through a divinely led invasion from the skies but through the transformation of human life and ideals, by the spirit and ideals of Jesus Christ.

VI

Such an interpretation of the development of Christianity as this, if its positions be soundly established, as I trust they are, suggest certain general conclusions. To begin with, Christianity is a living religion. This is not merely to say that it is an existing religion, having survived for two thousand years and still asserting its force. Life is a very great deal more than mere existence; it is a power of inner change to meet outer changing circumstances; it is an unbroken continuity of adequate response, and all this controlled from within and not from without. It is a way of keeping the past and yet transmuting it.

Christianity possesses that power. One must not press the analogies of biology too far, but by all these analogies Christianity is not something carried down the ages by the faith and devotion of its followers in some such fashion as though it were apart from everything else. It has rather grown in and through the lives of successive generations finding a soil to nourish it in every aspect of changing culture and outlook; and yet, through the very life force of it, changing what it takes into its own substance. It has something of the quality of Bergson's life force. It has always been finding a channel for itself through materials alien to its own nature. It has not always found it easy to find its appointed thoroughfare; indeed, it has no appointed thoroughfare, except to keep on.

The "Life Force" of Christianity

It possesses that strange sense of unity with all the surrounding order along with a profound and disquieting sense of not belonging to it at all, which is one aspect of our own conscious life. It has first and last gone down a good many blind alleys and been stopped. Church history calls these blind alleys heresies and schisms and modifications of the essential Christian spirit, with no force to justify their continuance. If one should think of Christianity as a tree, a good many of whose branches have never been able to so develop as to become a part of the living organism of the tree, then there are plenty of dead branches on the Christian growth; but there has always been a main line.

Christianity has driven its living way through the historic order of which it is a part; it has penetrated the spirits of the generations, possessed and changed the individual, given a quality to philosophies and sciences which they would never have possessed without it, and still kept a certain mystic force and separateness of its own, which has been the secret of its power to touch and change anything else. If this is not life, it is difficult to find anything else to name it. Christianity is Spirit-led religion. It was long ago foretold that this should be so. "When He the Spirit of Truth shall come, He shall lead you into all truth."

A Spirit-led religion

By any test this represents the expectation of Christianity standing on the very threshold of its career. It was committed to an undefined future; it was to be subject to circumstance. But it possessed an indwelling power to find the road. This indwelling power of Christianity to find the road is as near as anything can be its charter for the journey, and the secret of its success in the distance already covered.

It follows naturally that Christianity has not always maintained the same level of consistency. There have been times when it has been almost lost in the surrounding order and fairly struggled for the power to transform and assimilate what it had received into itself. But it possesses an inexhaustible power of self-purification. It has not, for any long historic period, consented to alien qualities in its own life. It has had an enormous force of transmutation; it is the commonplace of modern-minded church historians that Christianity has received into its life elements from many and some strange sources, and that these in one form or another endure.

But just as nature, with her winds and her rains and the ministry of her constant years, has a way of giving the dominant colours of our mother earth to all that man builds upon it, so that her grasses come in to heal the wounds of trampled battlefields, and her grays and browns and greens assert themselves over all man's handiwork, nothing has long been a part of the Christian order without taking, so to speak, the colour and quality of the Christian spirit.

One may trace, if he pleases, its sacraments to older sources, but now they are Christian sacraments. The bread and wine upon its tables or her altars may once have been interpreted by a different liturgy. Now they are the broken Body and the shed Blood of Jesus Christ. Its great festivals may have their rooting in old folk habit and have been associated with the processes of nature. Now they are Christian festivals, asserting great Christian assurances; those who celebrate them would not recognize their sources. There is undoubtedly a sublimation of old philosophies in the Christian creeds, but the Christian element has subdued the philosophic to its own ends.

Christianity need not fear to acknowledge its debts

This is one of the reasons why we should not be afraid of recognizing the very great inheritances of Christianity from other sources. That proves nothing at all except the essential tenacity and transforming force of the Christian spirit; it should really be a testimony to be rejoiced in. The power of Christianity to free itself from that which it cannot subdue to its own purposes and to transform what it can, passing itself from stage to stage toward a higher level, is one of the outstanding aspects of its history. "Christianity, ever borrowing its forms from the surroundings in which it has to live its life, after it has for a time given in to them, in turn frees itself and triumphs over the inferior and temporary elements which first captivated it. From age to age it displayed an increasing independence and a purer and loftier spirituality."[2]

VII

All this, of course, has been inevitable. Christianity cannot operate in a vacuum any more than anything else. It must have material to work with and it has found its material in the general content of life and the general course of history. Its own history is a series of actions and reactions and cannot be written save in terms of relationships. Christianity has never been independent of the time spirit; it has always in any one period been a cross-section of Western life. And yet it has always possessed something to save it from any one time or any set of forces. Perhaps it would be truer to say that there has been a Christian time spirit always, for two thousand years, a faith, a loyalty, an outlook upon life, an understanding of God and His ways with men which we can call Christian and nothing else, which has always represented the aspiring best, the inspiring force, the topmost table-land of humanity's lift toward God.

Christian reason has always sought what one may call the Christian control. If a Christianity thus always being entangled

[2]Quoted from Sabatier Guignebert, *Christianity*, p. 400.

and always being set free is not to lose itself altogether, it must have something by which to know itself Christian and through which to assert its authorities and its differences. Many such controls have been suggested—the integrity of the creeds, the authority of the Church, the entire sufficiency of the Bible, or even the Christian consciousness; but it would seem by any sound test that the supreme control of Christianity is the mind of Christ, with all that delusively simple phrase implies. But there must always be a distinction between what is universal and timeless and capable of reinterpretation and reapplication of the mind of Christ, and any historic situation through which it has been expressed, even the most primitive. It will not do to suggest that Christianity should dissolve the development of two thousand years and become now what it might have become then—a mystical and ethical fellowship centred around the teachings of Jesus, and that alone.

There are some things which cannot be undone. Christianity cannot go back without taking account of the present any more than it can go on without taking account of the past. The phrase "back to Jesus" is somewhat misleading; the issues of Christianity have never been backward—they have always been forward. It might be truer to say "forward to Jesus," if that phrase did not sound like a pious epigram.

VIII

The tenacious strength of the Christian mind

In dealing with the present situations of Christianity and the churches, and in planning for the future, we shall have to recognize how deeply rooted the Christian mind really is. It is relatively easy to deal with organizations and institutions; the thing whose tenacity counts is the mind behind them. That word "mind" may be made as inclusive as possible—call it a complex, if you please; it is, at any rate, an outlook, passion, a confidence, a faith, a pride, a loyalty, and all in an imponderable interweaving the strength of which cannot be overestimated. So many things have been woven into it, it is not to be undone and put together in a new way

in a day. There is a mind and temperament type behind every church, which cannot be reached and changed save through inheritances, education—sometimes the very reconstitution of the soul itself.

The entire Christian mind does not exist in any one communion, or in any single individual. Great elements of it are in Roman Catholicism, other great elements of it in Protestantism; it is mystic and Quaker. It is sacramental for one group. It is sincere faith in the Bible in another. It is confidence in the triumphant quest of human reason in another. It is as idle to deny the elements of the Christian mind in these widely contrasted groups as it is to assert that Christianity must be any one of them, all the rest of them being somehow wrong.

The first step in the rapprochement of the various elements in Christianity to-day is the sympathetic understanding of what lies behind different positions, or, if we cannot understand, at least the sympathetic recognition of what lies behind different positions. I, at least, do not know any key to this absolutely necessary, and still sadly inadequate, understanding, except a very patient following of all the ways in which these different mediations of Christianity have come into existence, even down to their rooting in differences of temperament and soul.

We ought not to grow impatient with one another because we have these different minds, or to underestimate their tenacity because they happen to be imponderable. There is need now, not only of reconciling understandings, but of the true Christian spirit of charity to dissolve bitternesses and alignments which have been long in being created, and must be reached through the minds which entertain them, rather than through the institutions through which they express themselves.

Any future united Church must fully express the Christian mind

Any future reassociation of Christianity, organically, must take account of this many-sided character of the Christian mind and find a place for the expression of those elements which have so far proved themselves as to seem as nearly permanent as any human thing can

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be permanent. The essential question the ideal Church of the future will have to face will not be how it should be governed, but how it shall manage completely to express the many-sided richness of the Christian spirit.

Finally, and in a paragraph, any such survey of the past of Christianity as this inadequate survey itself may suggest, must confirm the Christian confidence, support the Christian hope. We should be foolish to underestimate the challenging forces which religion generally and Christianity specifically are facing to-day. If the too conservative Christian mind should succeed in tying up the Christian position too straitly with the facts and forms with which it has so far been associated, that mind might go farther towards defeating Christianity than any of the foes it fears. But if we should dare to believe that Christianity, in its own proper spirit, is invulnerable, being after all the time spirit of God, felt and followed, carrying with it down the years, as its changeless reality, those understandings of God and life which were first spoken and revealed beneath the skies of Palestine and have since proved adequate to every situation, then we should expect it to meet the future as it has met the past.

It will have as its support the protest which will not be silenced, of human folk who believe themselves created for a high spiritual destiny, against sciences and philosophies which see in our humanity nothing but transient aspects of matter and force. It began as an answer to a hope, a response to a need. As long as hope and need endure, humanity will respond to its appeal. It is not conditioned by sciences or philosophies; it is conditioned by two things only—man's profoundest need and the supremest response that need has ever received. It has made its past out of the combination of just these two elements; it will make its far future in exactly the same way.

THE END

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Gaius Glenn Atkins was born in Indiana, October 5, 1868, and educated in Ohio State University, Yale Divinity School and elsewhere.

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THE MAKING OF THE CHRISTIAN MIND

The Christian mind of today is clearly delineated with the aid of its historical growth. The author believes that there is not a fear or a splendor of faith which Christianity has ever sheltered that does not live somewhere among us today. The book is an interpretation of all those forces which have combined to create the Christian mind.

He shows the origin of the Christian mind in Christ, then what the Apostles received from Jesus and on through the progressive stages of Deliverance, Doctrine, Imperialism, Worship and Liturgy, Sacrament, Mysticism, Protestantism and Humanitarianism.

A contour history of Christianity, seeking also the understanding of what lifted now this summit and now that against the horizon of twenty centuries to leave them there majestic and commanding, subject still to slow moulding influences and strangely enduring.

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